

THE
ECLECTIC REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1863.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. AN OLD ECLECTIC REVIEWER.	279
II. FINE ENGLISH; OR THOUGHTS ON WRITING AND PREACHING	306
III. CONGREGATIONALISM UPON ITS TRIAL	316
IV. D'AUBIGNE'S GENEVA AND CALVIN	333
V. ARE WE PROTESTANTS?	357
VI. OUR BOOK CLUB	378

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CONTENTS OF THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

- I. ULRICH VON HUTTEN.
- II. THE RACES OF EUROPE.
- III. ULTRAMONTANISM AND FREE THOUGHT.
- IV. A TRIAD OF MUSES.
- V. THE DAUGHTER OF GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.
- VI. RENAN'S LIFE OF CHRIST.

THE ECLECTIC.

I.

AN OLD ECLECTIC REVIEWER.*

WE purpose to devote a few pages to loitering over the works of James Montgomery. Pleasant it will be, we believe, to ourselves, and not unpleasant to our readers. Of the great Church poets of our times, very few names are better known than his; while we believe his writings are not so well-known as they deserve to be. Literary tastes and fashions have greatly changed during the last twenty-five years. But although highly esteemed, Montgomery was never among the most popular of our poets. Popularity does not always depend on the genius of a writer; it is but the finding a larger audience, and this again depends upon the fitness and relation of sentiment. James Montgomery was a sacred poet; it is remarkable, but it is true, that for a long time, following, in the belief of a well-known but most fallacious dogma of Dr. Johnson, poetry was supposed to be altogether unfitted and unsuited for the vehicle of piety; and it will, we believe, be admitted that few poets more successfully contradict and destroy the fallacy, than James Montgomery. Of all our sacred poets, while he most frequently indulges in the divine raptures and ecstasies in the contemplation of the beauty of holiness, he ventures on the greatest variety of themes, and travels more widely into the large circles of human, scenic, and pictorial interest: he presents many claims for homage as a poet, which would be admitted by those, who would not defer to his wondrous power over the resources of temple music.

It is not very generally known what a mixture of national associations blend in the bard of Sheffield; he was an Irishman,

* 1. *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of James Montgomery.* By John Holland and James Everett. Seven volumes. Longmans'.

2. *Poetical Works of James Montgomery.* Longmans'.

if the parentage indicates the nation; he was a Scotchman, if nationality springs from the birthplace; while, by adoption, he was an Englishman. He was the son of a Moravian minister, the Rev. John Montgomery who was appointed to the pastoral charge of a small congregation at Irvine, a seaport in Ayrshire; and there, under the same roof with the little Moravian chapel, the future poet was born, November 4th, 1771. The good people of Irvine are naturally proud of the poet's reputation; and in the town a tablet memorializes visitors that Ayrshire, the county of Burns, is also the native county of James Montgomery. Soon after his birth his parents removed to Ireland again. Those first years were very nomadic. In 1777, he was brought by his father to Fulneck, the well-known Moravian school, near Leeds in Yorkshire; there, with his brother Ignatius, he was left to pursue his education. In 1783 his father and mother devoted themselves to the work of foreign missions in the West Indies; in this field of their labours they very shortly died, the wife, in the Island of Tobago, the husband at St. Thomas' parish in Barbadoes; a grove of tamarind trees in the old mission station of Sharon, marks the missionaries' resting place. On missionary platforms their distinguished son often exclaimed, "I am the son of a missionary," and to his birth and to their graves he forcibly alludes in some of his well-known lines.

"The loud Atlantic ocean
On Scotland's rugged breast
Rocks, with harmonious motion,
His weary waves to rest :
And, gleaming round her emerald isles,
In all the pomp of sunset smiles
On that romantic shore,
My parents hail'd their first-born boy ;
A mother's pangs my mother bore,
My father felt a father's joy ;—
My father—mother—parents, now no more !
*Beneath the Lion star they sleep,
Beyond the western deep ;
And when the sun's noon glory crests the waves,
He shines without a shadow on their graves."*

In this school at Fulneck, then, while his parents were working and dying, Montgomery was preparing for the part he was to play in the great world. In some aspects, perhaps, the village and the schools are less changed than might be expected in the course of nearly a century of years. It is a delightful retreat. It is a Protestant cloister, cut off from the noisy world as much and as far as any place can be in England. It is a healthy, hilly

spot, among the Yorkshire hills. Upon any nature cast in a susceptible frame, the services of the Moravian Church music have a most exciting influence. Montgomery never ceased to be a Moravian, and very much of his verse is the birth of the Moravian mind. It is very amazing that these people are not better known; they little deserve the designation of the Countess of Huntingdon, of being the most wild enthusiasts on the face of the earth. Amidst the tones of their beautiful music, and the airs of those hymns and devotions so inspiring, so soothing, and resting, the young days of the future poet were passed; but during the years of his training he was, he testifies, carefully secluded from any commerce with the world, as if imprisoned in a cloister. He thought highly, however, of the influences of his school, though, we apprehend, that frequently the cultivation of prayer-meetings among the children would lead to exhibitions little short of ludicrous. The boys of like ages and attainments took tea together. One day the beverage was changed, and when the boys had all partaken, they formed a circle hand-in-hand, and sung a hymn. One of the least was then placed in the centre of a ring, to officiate in prayers. He knelt down and said, "Oh Lord, bless us little children, and make us very good. We thank Thee for what we have received. Oh, bless this good chocolate to-day, *and give us more of it!*" We do not wonder that our poet tells us "the class could not retain its seriousness; it was the natural expression of every one of our hearts." Mistakes like this are apt to happen when either younger or elder children play at prayers. There seems to us to have been little to relieve the monotony of those schoolboy hours of the orphan lad; sometimes, indeed, a trip to Kirkstall or Esholt Hall, or Brierly Park; and once the learned and venerable, and most eccentric Lord Monboddoo was introduced by the Moravian Bishop, the names of several boys were told over to him; he appeared to pay but little attention till young Montgomery was introduced by the good bishop, with the remark, "Here, my lord, is one of your countrymen," when he started as from a deep reverie, and exclaimed, while he brandished a large horsewhip over the boy's head, "I hope he will take care that his country shall never be ashamed of him." The ministry was the expectation of the good brethren of Fulneck for their young pupil, but he surrendered himself to fits of abstraction,—to covering huge quantities of waste paper with rhythmic efforts. He acquired, among the practical people, a reputation for indolence. It was resolved to put him to business, at least for a time, and Mirfield near Fulneck, was the spot in which, in the retail shop of a fine bread-baker, he was expected to

commence the severer discipline of life. The baker was a Moravian brother, but the shopboy does not seem to have been at all reconciled to his condition, for on a Sunday morning, the 19th of June, 1789, he packed up a few things, including his manuscript poetry, he slipped away from the house, and was soon on the high road. He was sixteen years old. He was not apprenticed, perhaps he feared lest he should be. He had one change of linen, and he had three and sixpence in his pocket. Moreover, his character appears to have been good, quite stainless, and excellent, but the lad was, no doubt, earnestly desiring something more congenial with his tastes and talents, than baking bread in a village shop. He went out, not knowing whither he went; walking along unknown roads, he found himself at Wentworth, the little humble hamlet beneath the shadow of Wentworth House, the seat of the Earl Fitzwilliam; many years after he was received there an honoured guest; while refreshing himself in the village inn, a truly romantic idea took possession of the young adventurer: he wrote a copy of verses, addressed to the noble owner of Wentworth House, and, with a fluttering heart, he proceeded to Wentworth Park, to present them to his lordship; he was so fortunate as to meet him, and the excellent earl, with his characteristic condescension, took them, read them, and gave to their gratified author, on the spot, a guinea; this was the first profit and patronage the author ever received, and it must have been, to the homeless lad, a most important addition to his finances. Montgomery, however, did not, in leaving his situation, intend to follow a course of purposeless wanderings, and even at Wentworth it came to a close. He met with a youth from the neighbouring village of Wath; from him he learnt that his father needed an assistant; he applied the next day for the situation, and Mr. Hunt agreed to engage him, provided he could obtain the consent of his late master, or of his Moravian guardians; and it was probably in the interim between his writing and hearing from Mirfield, that the pleasant incident occurred with the Earl. His master, who seems to have been a kind man, came over to meet the prodigal, and Montgomery says, "I was so affected by his appearance that I ran out to meet him in the inn-yard, and he was so overwhelmed with tenderness at the sight of me, that we clasped each others' arms as he sat on horseback, and remained weeping without speaking a word for some time." There was mutual esteem, notwithstanding this unhappy piece of youthful errantry, for he gave the lad a handsome written character; he sent over his clothes, and supplied him with all necessary money; and so for some

time Wath, "The Queen of Villages," as it has sometimes been designated, was the young lad's home. It seems to have been at the time to which we refer a true home for a poet, sequestered from the world, and abounding in rustic traditions. The villagers watched the church on St. Mark's eve, and few of them had not seen a ghost; invisible hounds also, Gabriel's hounds, were heard yelping through the welkin at nightfall. The village rejoiced in its ancient maypole; and a still more exciting thing, was the casting of a bell; for a large bell-foundry was in the village; and the event was almost as interesting as the similar occurrence to the mountaineers of the Hartz, and other districts of Germany. The lad, as may be inferred, was remarkably grave, serious, and silent; he was also exemplarily steady, and industrious. The family of his master, Mr. Hunt, became warmly attached to him. He, however, only spent twelve months at Wath; he became acquainted with a friend, who stirred his ambition, and the way was made for his departure from Yorkshire to London, where he entered the house of Harrison, the bookseller, of Paternoster Row; here, without knowing all the perils and pains of the literary life, he knew enough; it was, no doubt, a valuable education to him. We cannot follow him through those years, indeed, his residence in London was brief; there he attempted, in addition to his ordinary work, many literary occupations, but he soon shrunk from the perils of the career, he turned his back on London, and mounted the coach for Wath, passing through the town of Sheffield.

After engaging for some time with his old employer at Wath, the wanderer again left, but this time for his final destination. In 1792 he entered Sheffield, entering in the service of Mr. Gales—the situation was very congenial to his tastes, and for sixty years he was to find in Sheffield his home, and for by far the greater portion of that time an honoured home, although, as he said in public in 1845, there was probably not a more solitary being than himself to be found in the town on the dark Sunday evening, when he crossed the ladies' bridge, and walked up towards his untried home in the bosom of the kind family, which then received him, and some members of which were to be in future years so much indebted to him. We hurry over the particulars of those early years in the town of his adoption; but there are many circumstances of a romantic interest upon which we might well linger; it was a time of severe distress and political agitation; and it is remarkable, and illustrative of the harsh injustice of those times, that James Montgomery, who became a quiet and somewhat timid conservative, found himself immediately whirled along upon the tide of political excitement.

In 1794 a general fast was proclaimed, and it was observed in Sheffield by "the Friends of Peace and Reform;" a large public meeting was held, and after a prayer and a sermon in the open air, a hymn was sung by the assembled thousands—it was composed by Montgomery, and was seized, with the papers of the Corresponding Society, on the arrest of Hardy the secretary; and Montgomery once said, "one of the first hymns of mine ever sung, found its way into Billy Pitt's green bag"—it had the further honour to be recited by Mr. Gibbs in the Sessions House of the Old Bailey—it was a singular commencement for the great Christian lyricist of the age. The hymn is nervous in language; but not otherwise remarkable, and certainly contains no words which could be warped by the most microscopic eye of tyranny to the prejudice of the author. In the course of circumstances Gales, the employer of Montgomery, became involved in the political complications; he had been the publisher of the *Sheffield Register*—he fled, taking a formal leave of his friends and readers, he says:—

"Could my imprisonment," says the fugitive editor, "or even death, serve the cause which I have espoused—the cause of peace, liberty, and justice,—it would be cowardice to fly from it; but, convinced that ruining my family, and distressing my friends, by risking either, would only gratify the ignorant and the malignant, I shall seek that livelihood in another land, which I cannot peaceably obtain in this. To be *accused* is now to be *guilty*: and however conscious I may be of having neither done, said, or written anything that militates against peace, order, and good government, yet when I am told witnesses are *suborned* to swear me guilty of treasonable and seditious practices, it becomes prudent to avoid such dark assassins, and to leave to the *informers*, and their *employers*, the mortification of knowing, that however deep their villany was planned, it has been *unsuccessful*."

Immediately on leaving Sheffield, Mr. Gales found a temporary asylum in the house of a fellow-patriot at Newhill Grange, near Wath—and one of Montgomery's exploits in horsemanship, was the carrying Mrs. Gales behind him on a pillion to this unsuspected hiding-place for her husband. "We were," says he, "four hours in riding eight miles." After remaining some time in concealment until they were able to gather some pieces from the wreck of their affairs, they at last found their way to America, Montgomery returned with large interest the kindness he had received from the family of Mr. Gales; the two elder sisters of the expatriated politician immediately came to the shop in Hartshead, and continued the bookselling and stationary business under the firm of Anne and Elizabeth Gales—and with these ladies afterwards was joined their

youngest sister Sarah—and with them Montgomery continued to reside till death parted them from an inmate, on whom for half-a-century they were able to lean with the confidence of sisters on the assistance of a brother.

This was the turning-point in the career of Montgomery; he found means to purchase presses, types, and other working materials. At first he entered into partnership with a gentleman named Naylor—and the *Iris* newspaper was started—the representation of liberal principles, but of a moderate character; the moderate character, however, seems at first to have interfered with the prosperity of the newspaper. At the Doncaster quarter sessions, held January 22, 1795, James Montgomery appeared to answer an indictment for libel—for ‘the several false, scandalous, malicious, and seditious libels,’ contained in the third verse of a patriotic song printed at his office, although neither written by himself, nor printed in the columns of the *Iris*, and the jury found

“James Montgomery, printer, being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and evil-disposed person, and well knowing the premises, but wickedly, maliciously, and seditiously contriving, devising, and intending to stir up and excite discontent and sedition among his Majesty’s subjects, and to alienate, and withdraw the affection, fidelity, and allegiance of his said Majesty’s subjects from his said Majesty; and unlawfully and wickedly to seduce and encourage his said Majesty’s subjects to resist and oppose his said Majesty’s government, and the said war,” &c.

At a later period Montgomery discovered that he had been really honoured by a State prosecution; it was an effort to crush the meetings of the associated clubs in Sheffield—the key to all the proceedings was found after the lapse of nearly half-a-century—and the conviction of the prisoner, it was supposed would go a long way towards curbing the insolence the liberals had manifested.

The jury, after being locked up for nearly an hour, returned into court with a verdict of Guilty of printing and publishing, &c.; the court refused to accept the verdict; they retired again for fifty minutes longer, they then brought in their verdict “guilty,” and the chairman sentenced the defendant to suffer three months’ imprisonment in the castle of York, and to pay a fine of twenty pounds. Montgomery had been allowed to return home, but the next day he was taken into custody, and conveyed by a messenger to York. It is interesting to recall the circumstance, that on a night previous to the trial at Doncaster, an old man sought him out for the purpose of offering not only consolation, but even more substantial aid, if needed. This old

man was no other than Mr. Hunt of Wath; the interview was naturally affecting, and the affection evinced on both sides was the best testimony to the conduct and integrity of James Montgomery. We cannot enter with the prisoner his cell and continue with him during the period of his imprisonment, but it is very interesting to know that an address to him upon the occasion of his sentence, was signed by John Pye Smith, then a young man in the town of Sheffield; the young theologian was the intimate friend of the young prisoner. Soon after his release from York castle, his partnership in the property of the 'Iris,' was dissolved; he became the sole proprietor, and in a short time he was so unfortunate as to be arrested again for libel. Colonel Athorpe, a military magistrate, had rushed upon a crowd, with his drawn sword, and had wounded some persons; he also ordered the volunteers to fire, and two persons were killed; the expressions were very mild and temperate in the 'Iris,' and their relation to the colonel who was the cause of the military murders and assaults, could only be doubtfully surmised. The jury, however, again found him guilty, and the sentence was pronounced, "that James Montgomery be imprisoned for the term of six months in the castle of York; that he pay a fine of thirty pounds to the king; and that he give security for his good behaviour for two years, himself in a bond of two hundred pounds, and two sureties in fifty pounds each." After the trial he was taken into custody, and conveyed to York. The gaoler in whose charge Montgomery was placed accompanied him to York, with the least possible demonstration of officiality by the way; and on reaching the city, where he was known, he parted from the prisoner, half a street's length; telling him to go first, knock at the castle gate, and get admitted before he (the gaoler) came up. He received from his turnkey in the second confinement, a greater measure of consideration and kindness than in his first imprisonment. The magistrates previous to quitting Doncaster, in consideration of the precarious state of his health, ordered that every facility should be given for the introduction of whatever might restore his health, or alleviate the evils of his confinement; "but for this indulgence," says his biographer, "there is reason to believe that the sentence of imprisonment would have proved to the sufferer a sentence of death." Again, during his imprisonment he had, in the first and foremost ranks of his friends, to assign a place to John Pye Smith. He generously and judiciously undertook the management of the newspaper and printing-office on behalf of his friend. When, fifty years afterwards, James Montgomery attended a meeting of the Congregational Union in Sheffield,

he mentioned that one of the very first persons whose friendship he enjoyed, after he came to Sheffield, was a man who took no second place among Congregational theologians.

"This kind friend," added the speaker, with much *naïveté* and feeling, and amid the reiterated cheers of his audience, "when on a certain occasion I had to leave Sheffield for six months, stepped into my place, and looked after my affairs: we were, indeed, alike young and inexperienced politicians, committing many mistakes, and getting into some scrapes, which the possession of older and colder heads might probably have enabled us to avoid."

It is very pleasant to note the correspondence at this moment between these young strugglers, who afterwards attained to such eminence in their different departments of Church work. Writing to his friend from prison, Montgomery says:—

"Jan. 23. My dear Friend—You have now stepped into my place, and you will not long be there before the anxieties and vexations attendant on the discharge of my painful public duty will begin to harass you."—J. M. to J. P. S.

"Jan. 30. I am exceedingly glad to find you take so tender and active a concern in my welfare at home. Give my best respects to all the men, and tell them I rely much on their diligence and friendship."—J. M. to J. P. S.

"Feb. 13. I have little room to spare to make any further observations respecting the 'Iris:' be firm, cool, and moderate; you never can sink into dulness, if I estimate your talents aright. But beware of being hurried away by generous indignation, *imprudent zeal for truth*, or the dread of censure from *any party*."

In his prison the company was promiscuous enough, but he found even there congenial society, not only some four respectable persons who had seen better days, but eight of the people called Quakers, confined for refusing to pay tithes, although they never did nor ever would have resisted the seizure of their property to any amount the rapacious priest required. The poet says "there were three venerable grey-headed men among them, and the others decent and sensible." One of them the poet found to be his principal and best companion, a tender, shrewd, and cheerful man. The poet testifies of him, that he had "a heart as honest and tender, as his face is clear and smiling." Montgomery, although the period of his second imprisonment was longer than the first, seems to have passed his time more tolerably, and returning to Sheffield, life smoothed its pathway for him. The colonel who had been his prosecutor, was anxious through life to disabuse his character of the stigma which attached to it, by a prosecution, in which so

eminently, the prisoner, while suffering the verdict of the law, received honours from the public opinion of his town. On one occasion, when Athorpe was presiding as a magistrate in the Cutler's Hall, he perceived Montgomery in the crowd, and sending to him by an officer, made his ancient libeller come and sit by him on the Bench. The independence of Montgomery became known and calculated upon: at the same time, he must have disappointed some by the moderation of his tone and character. He says "I was not born, I have not lived, I shall not die a demagogue or a parasite." Among the great men who have been compelled to mature their characters and convictions within the walls of a prison, Montgomery certainly cannot be regarded as one of the greatest sufferers, but that such a man, for expressions so mild, should have been consigned to prison at all, is an illustration of the degraded state of the Government of the day, and the harsh and severe despotism, beneath which our fathers so recently lived.

It is not within the purpose of this article to follow the history of the poet's editorial career; he was young; he had to fight his way forward through many difficulties, and was again exposed to a still more dangerous Government prosecution; but in the year 1806 he stepped into a new career by the publication of the 'Wanderer in Switzerland, and other poems,' and the volume soon procured for its author an amount of what may be rather called notoriety than fame. The *Edinburgh Review* visited it with one of its severest articles. Twenty-five years later, it at once deprecated and apologized for that article; but looking at it quietly and calmly, after half-a-century has passed away, it is amazing that a paper so utterly devoid of all discrimination and literary prescience and judgment could have been published in that Review, especially as Montgomery had claims as a liberal editor and a sufferer from the avowal of liberal principles, on the chief liberal organ. The *Quarterly Review*, on the contrary, at that time the vehement organ of the Tory party, honoured itself by a lengthy review, in which it dropped all criticism arising from politics, and in the most generous and favourable manner pointed out the remarkable beauties of the volume. Then came the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' and the sharp glitter of those lines which dazzled and blinded Jeffrey, brought into relief the genius of Montgomery. It is true the satirist was not very eulogistic:—

"O'er his last works let classic *Sheffield* weep.—
May no rude hand disturb their early sleep."

Byron, in his notes, paid Montgomery the compliment of saying: "After all, the bard of Sheffield is a man of very considerable genius; his 'Wanderer in Switzerland' is worth a thousand lyrical ballads." Some readers now will think that the last half of the compliment makes the first worthless. Among the eulogistic reviews, a remarkable place must be assigned to that which appeared in the 'Eclectic' as it led to Montgomery's connection with the Review as one of its most valued contributors. Samuel Greatheed had recently resigned its editorship, and the Review was beneath the care of the youthful and soon-lamented barrister, Daniel Parken.

The poet and his critic scarcely met until a few days before Parken's death, but a fast friendship was struck between them, arising especially from Montgomery's connection with the Review in that palmly period when Robert Hall, Adam Clarke, Olinthus Gregory, and John Foster were associated together in the rank of correspondents. Montgomery, like Wordsworth, in some points of his genius, resembled him also in his inability to write a good letter or to sustain a good conversation, but the most interesting letters are those addressed to Parken; they were written during the most interesting period of his life, and they furnish the clue to many of those religious experiences, which, perhaps, those who only knew Montgomery in the latter years of his life, when that life seemed to have settled into so still and lake-like a calm, could scarcely comprehend as his. Parken writes of him in those days: "He is, you know he is, truly a gem, but he is covered over with a frozen sensibility, which, perhaps, you can neither thaw nor see through." To Parken this frozen sensibility thawed, and now we are also a little able to see into the heart of what always must have been an almost shivering and painful sensitiveness. What biography do we ever read worth the perusal, which brings before us the picture of a being perfectly at ease with itself? They who believe, enter into rest! When, fifty years after this period, we walked with the poet from the Mount down into Sheffield, his nature seemed to have sunk into the stillness of perfect peace. What a difference between such quiet and that internal misery, represented by such a paragraph as the following. Reviewing 'Marmion,' after apologising to Parken for sending it by instalments, he says:—

"It is Sunday, and without being a hypocrite, I can conscientiously affirm, that I seldom concern myself with business or friendship on the Sabbath,—which is, however, to me no day of rest, but generally of double gloom and despondency. I know this is my own fault; and that I

am an insane self-tormentor. Yet, why is it not otherwise? If I could help it, would I be miserable from choice? And how miserable I am, the great Searcher of hearts only knows; for He only knows what an insincere, unbelieving creature I am, and how much I grieve his good Spirit, which has not yet departed entirely from me, though my disobedience and enmity and rebellion seem to grow stronger and bolder the more I experience of the mercy and longsuffering of my Creator and Redeemer. But I must shut my bosom from you, though it is ready to burst. If you knew me, you might, perhaps, cease to love me, but you would not cease to pray for me.'

"These sad expressions evidently both pained and puzzled Parken, who immediately responded in such terms as the Scriptures supply for the relief of 'a broken and contrite heart,' and closing very judiciously with, 'they who look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, are to look unto Him and be saved.'"

Such expressions occur frequently during this period of his life. The reader will be glad to notice them, as illustrating the progress of experience, by which the young man became fitted, to be the interpreter of the feelings and the utterer of the voices of the church. How could any man attain to eminence in church song, who had not felt the church's sorrow?

The friendship between these young men, so admirably fitted to help each other, was not of very long continuance. During the period of Parken's life, he continued an active and worthy editor of the '*Eclectic Review*;' they appear to have corresponded years before they met. In 1812 Montgomery, after a visit to the Taylors at Ongar, in the month of June, saw Parken for the last time, and shortly afterwards, on his return to Sheffield, he writes:—

"Since I left home in the beginning of May I have never yet had one hour of sober thinking, or sober feeling,—I mean every-day thinking and feeling,—thinking and feeling that do not wear and tear out life itself, with alternate joys and torments, reveries or trances. O how I long for *quietude*! after all the excesses and exhaustion of such intercourse as I held in London with spirits of fire, and air, and earth, and water,—for spirits of each of these descriptions I encountered,—my heart and soul desire nothing so earnestly as peace in solitude. In town I had too much society; at home I have too little; four weeks of the former have therefore so unsettled me, that it will require four weeks of the latter to bring me back to my lonely habits—I mean to the enjoyment of them, in the easy, regular, unconscious exercise of them. *Certainly I saw and heard a great deal in London, but it was like seeing the hedges, or hearing the nightingale (as I actually did), out of a stage-coach window, the former in such rapid retrograde motion, that no distinct picture of them could be retained, the notes of the latter so interrupted or deadened with the lumbering of wheels, and the cracking of the*

whip, that they were caught like the accidental tones of the Æolian harp, when the wind will neither play on it, nor yet let it alone, but dallies with the strings till they tremble into momentary music, instantly dissolving, and disappointing the ear that aches with listening. I wonder if you will understand this; I am sure I do; and yet I doubt whether I can make any one else. But all the sights and sounds of the last month are not thus ineffable and evanescent to me. Your kind looks are still smiling upon me, and your kind words still heard in my heart."

A nature like that of Montgomery has usually a fine faculty given to it for wounding a friend's feelings. The shrinking and the sensitive are often cruel in their exactions. Montgomery was always a nervous creature, full of terrors and timidities, and fears. His mental labour affected alike his brain and his stomach, and at a later period of his life, after his completion of 'The Missionary Voyages,' on walking out one day to breathe the fresh air, he felt so impressed with the conviction that he might die suddenly in the field, that in a moment of morbid excitement he wrote his name on a slip of paper with a pencil, in order that, should he be found dead, it might not be difficult to ascertain who he was. Parken wrote to him just as he was about to start upon his circuit, in his wise quiet way, saying, "My dear friend, I'm sure you are unwell, because I think you "are unreasonable." "I saw," said Montgomery, "that I had "wounded his feelings, though I had no such intention;" and then Montgomery wrote one of those letters we meet with occasionally in the lives of men, thrilling us not only by the insight they afford us to the personal biography, but still more by the circumstances surrounding them. In the following painful words, the poet pours out evidently the overflowings of an unhappy soul:—

"But it seems that some mischievous impulse carried away my hand with a speed and fury as difficult to stop as the windmill-vane in revolution, so that, instead of a gentle tap to rouse your slumbering attention, it struck blows which would have been fatal to any mortal friendship, but which have only proved the immortality of yours. *Immortality! O my friend, shall you and I ever be immortal in ONE place? It is one of the bitterest anticipations of that world of darkness and despair, which 'rolls not within the precincts of mercy,' that the society of friends will be no comfort there. If I must have my 'portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' may all whom I have loved on earth be for ever separated from me! But I will draw back my hand from touching this distracting chord, on which hang my most mysterious sorrows, lest you should think me indeed possessed by another evil spirit than my own.... I told you, or intended to tell you, that I had*

been much indisposed ever since my return: my illness was not the consequence of fatigue in travelling; it had seized me with violent pains, in the forenoon, before I set out, and I was in misery, and fear that made that misery torture, when I got into the road, with night and a long jolting journey before me. Since my arrival in Sheffield, though I have neither been confined to my bed nor my room, I have not been in a healthy state of feeling for an hour. Colds, coughs, pains in the chest, *numbness of brain*, bowel-irregularities, and nameless and numberless hypochondriacal plagues, successively, partially, or altogether, have afflicted me, and at present I expect no early relief. But the wounded spirit and the breaking heart, these are the hardest to bear with resignation—resignation to the will of God. Not that I feel so much over personal suffering, or repine at my temporal lot, but with these disorders of my perishing frame, there comes so much confusion, and doubt, and darkness, and desolation into my soul, that the powers of my mind seem paralysed, the affections of my heart withered, and every stream of hope or comfort passed away. Then, when I can neither think, nor write, converse, or even pray with connection and self-possession, I do indeed deem myself smitten, forsaken of God, and afflicted,—worthily smitten, forsaken of God, because I will not, cannot, come to Him,—and afflicted, because I perversely, and yet inevitably, refuse the consolations of his Spirit. O what a mystery of woe, what a mystery of iniquity is this! God deliver me from it, or carry me through it, as his wisdom and his goodness shall see fit! You will, perhaps, ascribe my recent relapse into this melancholy state to the interest and anxiety which I must feel in the welfare of the person by whom I sent my last unfortunate letter.”

This painful letter never reached the hand it was intended for. While the poet was pouring out all his passion and his grief, and his thought, the hand was cold; and the heart, that seems to have most understood the mind of the poet, was still. While the writer was waiting for the rejoinder to his letter, he received one from Mr. Beddome, Dr. Gregory's brother-in-law. “Our friend Parken is no more! He died last night at Aylesbury, “after a confinement of ten days. You may have heard that “he and [his brother] William were overturned in a gig, as they “were journeying on the home circuit.” Writing to his brother Ignatius Montgomery, he gives us a hint that his mind was unsettled by that mystery which disturbs us all when he says, “My dear friend Parken *now knows*.” After the death of Parken, Montgomery's career as a reviewer almost closed; he wrote occasionally, but never again with that rapid and continued interest in all subjects he manifested in those days of the Eclectic's best editorship. To these days Montgomery refers in his lines entitled ‘Reminiscences.’

Where are ye with whom in life I started,
Dear companions of my golden days ?
Ye are dead, estranged from me, or parted,
—Flown, like morning clouds, a thousand ways.

Where art thou, in youth my friend and brother,
Yea, in soul my friend and brother still ?
Heaven received thee, and on earth none other
Can the void in my lorn bosom fill.

Where is she, whose looks were love and gladness ?
—Love and gladness I no longer see !
She is gone ; and, since that hour of sadness,
Nature seems her sepulchre to me.

Where am I ?—life's current faintly flowing
Brings the welcome warning of release ;
Struck with death, ah ! whither am I going ?
All is well,—my spirit parts in peace.

Montgomery is one of the few men who for a long period of his life combined successfully the cultivation of poetry with business ; for a long time, in connection with the *Sheffield Iris*, he worked a general printing-office ; but the rules upon which he conducted his business, while they do not appear to have ruined him, but the reverse, they seem to have been sufficiently liberal to ruin almost anybody. Montgomery himself was very punctual in his payments, and boasted that no traveller or claimant ever left his office unpaid ; he made it also his boast that he never in his life sued any one for debt, and his biographer says with a gleam of humour, rare indeed amidst his volumes, "Such of his debtors as could obtain their accounts, might discharge them if disposed to do so ; but if not themselves weary of taking credit, they were in little danger of being asked for money." Indeed he conducted his business in a truly poetical manner ; he acted up to the conception of his own ideal, without being wealthy, he surrounded himself with comforts and enjoyments, and in due time retired pleasantly from all business concerns, to sink down to the calm and dignified old age of the man, most honoured of all men in the town of Sheffield ; he maintained a clear conscience and high principle. The typography of his paper before he declined connection with it, became remarkable for its old world appearance ; and, no doubt, a wife and three or four children would have given considerable vivacity to the poet's movements. From being regarded as a factious radical, which he never was, he became an influential editor, struggling through many misfortunes, debts and difficulties, to do his duty bravely and honestly ; then quietly and

serenely his life passed along, broken only by occasional absence from home, as a deputation for a missionary or a Bible society, or to deliver his lectures on Poetry before some literary institute—or to leave his residence, the Mount, some afternoon, the Mount at Sheffield—to attend some meeting in his town, and to be greeted by affectionate reverence, such as never can be awarded to the mere butterfly stranger—and to receive on some rare occasions, the visit of some passing literary celebrity, or inquisitive stranger, with letter of introduction—or to have the life of monotony broken by the launching of some new poem on the waves of public opinion, and to receive from his townsmen tokens of their love; to be prized by all denominations of Christians, as the Laureate of the Cross; to plant the tree in his garden on the anniversary of his eightieth year, and to sink to the grave quietly in his beautiful silvery serene old age—the old age in which too it is a memory with us, that we too had the honour of walking with him from the Mount to Sheffield one winter evening. To die,—and to have the tears and honours of his townfolk, anticipating the monument over his sepulchre. Yes, this is more to our mind than the butterfly life of Moore; brilliantly alternating between Holland House and Bowood—we can almost envy James Montgomery. We cannot envy Thomas Moore. Better far to be this quiet unobtrusive holy Christian man—to move through life thus sweetly and sacredly, than to be the admired and glittering songster of a thousand drawing-rooms; a bird for ever on the wing, and never in the nest.

Of course in these frequent wanderings from home, the poet was often greeted with the ovations of curiosity and distinction; this was remarkably the case upon his visit to Scotland. Each of the towns through which he passed—Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley, did all they could to honour him, but when he reached his native town of Irvine, he was met at the station by the provost, magistrates, and council, conducted to the Hall and made a burgess of the ancient and royal burgh, and his freedom presented amidst the acclamations of the town; the whole town being moved to its heart to receive him and give him its greetings. Under the guidance of the officials of the town, the venerable poet then was conducted to the place of his parentage and to all the spots associated with his birth and brief residence in the place. The poet was very old—seventy—but his nurse was living. “You must,” said the Provost, “see Mary Neale, she has long been confined to her chamber, but is very anxious to see you;” and in a comfortable cottage they found her surrounded by her grandchildren, and what made the interview still more

remarkable was, that through all those years the old grand-dame had kept a pincushion given to her by his mother as a keepsake. Montgomery had a sweet and tender penchant for old women, and he was naturally touched, as a mind less susceptible of emotion would not have been, by such an incident. The old body, verging towards ninety years of age, treasuring through the long period this precious trifle, which had also belonged to the Poet's sister, who performed her part of life and death before he was born, and of whom, besides this pincushion and the little gravestone, preserved by the aged crone, there was most likely not a single tangible memorial on earth. Most of our readers will remember the period of Montgomery's death, Sunday, April 30th, 1854. He had suffered little from immediate illness; as in the case of Wordsworth, he died from sheer old age, retaining a considerable amount of health to the last. He walked down to Sheffield the day before he died, complaining but slightly, but at family worship doing the very extraordinary thing of handing the Bible to Miss Gales, saying, "Sarah, you must read;" then he prayed with his usual pathos, smoked his pipe, and retired to rest. During the night he was smitten by the hand of death, and was found in the morning lying on the floor. There were no symptoms of paralysis, though consciousness was only partial, till in the afternoon the great change passed over his features, and with scarce a breath, in placid and beautiful resting, he sunk into inanimation. Of course, he was buried with all honours. Sheffield made almost a royal funeral for its beloved bard; every civic circumstance, every local institution, all the schools, all the denominations, the vicar with twenty-four of the clergy, the mayor and the corporation, city missionaries and Scripture-readers, the students of neighbouring colleges and private schools, all followed by ranks of gentlemen from the country round, on horseback, and the whole town in mourning, and all the shops closed. So following to the grave the sublime old man of eighty-three, who nearly seventy years before entered the town an almost penniless lad.

The genius of Montgomery has never, we think, received its fair proportion of appreciation; say what we will, a man who sets "the truth as it is in Jesus" to music, does not take the best road to fame. The productions of James Montgomery are unequalled, but not more so than the productions of Wordsworth, or Southey, or Browning. The taste, indeed, of the times, has changed, and to many these verses will probably seem only tame and insipid. The excitement of the age lives along the lines of its poetry, and readers demand new, startling, and strange mental revelations, and moral scenes. There is a school

of poetry which seems to demand passion, agitation, and agony, as its very condition. The writings of Montgomery only speak of peace, and the peace is that peace which genius usually would denounce with its most satiric and intolerant scorn; it is not the peace of Nature, it is the peace of God. Moreover, the very church itself seems to have a less keen apprehension of these things than it had in the day in which Montgomery wrote; and so it happens, that in neither the church nor the world is he so popular as he was once.

But, especially, we would say something of the genius of Montgomery, as displayed in his longer poems; we rate them very highly. We do not see how they can be regarded as inferior to Cowper's, while they evidence the possession of some attributes which evidently Cowper had not. But the comparison would be invidious between two such writers; and we will not pursue it. It will be more natural to suggest some points of contrast in Moore and Montgomery. A comparison between Moore and Montgomery is more instantly suggested, than between either poet and any other contemporary. The lines of Ebenezer Elliot are well known:—

“ Moore, the Montgomery of the drawing-room,
Montgomery, the Moore of sacred themes.”

The author of ‘Lalla Rookh,’ and the author of the ‘Pelican Island.’ It will be impossible; we are certain to cite from the longer poems of Moore such a number of noble passages, as teemingly overflow those of Montgomery. The genius of Moore was related to fancy, whose object ever is to pick up a number of pretty little things, and make them beautiful by their combination and their setting. The genius of Montgomery was related to imagination, whose business it is to select some great and noble being, and carve its huge shapelessness into form and majesty. We do not say that the genius of Montgomery was of imagination all compact, only that it was more immediately related to the power and faculty of imagination. They were both sweet writers; the sweetness of Moore was that of *Eau de Cologne*,—or even of Frangipani—or Jockey Clubs; the sweetness of Montgomery was that of mountain breezes, laden with the perfume of the heathery wild-flowers. The genius of Moore, in its expression, seems to be stilted—lame in its very alertness—the expression often appears in the most precise passages strained. Nothing in verse reveals more the poet's command of the torrents of the soul, than when he speaks in the language of the invective. Both Moore and

Montgomery have left their efforts; in the first, from 'Lalla Rookh,' we see and hear the mere chime of sentiment. It is a curse, and is so strained that it can scarcely be called forcible; it is too bitter; it is not human. Montgomery, in his poem, 'The West Indies,' has pronounced a curse upon a cruel planter, which, wields the satiric scourge in a single lash or two, of great power, but closes with that mysterious and shadowy foreboding, which is one of the finest and most effective auxiliaries to sublime emotion. The name of Montgomery is associated with four long poems,—'The West Indies,' 'Greenland,' 'The World before the Flood,' and 'The Pelican Island.' The 'Lalla Rookh' of Moore is the child of the East and the sun. The 'Greenland' of Montgomery is the child of the North and the ice; there is a mighty fascination in that great world of the Edda. But it surely exhibited a peculiar genius to shape those unvoyaged seas, and eternal icebergs, and volcanic geysirs, into a poem. Lord Dufferin's 'Yaugh's Voyage,' and Henderson's 'Iceland,' and Dr. Kane's Travels, have familiarized our imagination with the poetry of the ice; in truth it is a sublime world, of sights and sounds, most visionary and awful. Montgomery has, as usual with him, woven into the texture of the scenery, and the spirit and genius of the spot, the story of the Cross; and stirs our heart by the fine union of the grandeur of nature, with the hallowing of religious feeling. The *Edinburgh Review* very finely says—

In 'Greenland,' Mr. Montgomery appears, for the first time, to have found a theme at once calculated to be popular, from the richness and variety of the poetical development of which it was susceptible, and from being perfectly in unison with his own strongly devotional cast of mind;—one in which enthusiasm might walk hand-in-hand with truth, and the most striking features of external nature be associated with a moral beauty and grandeur still more commanding and attractive:—the desolate grandeur of snowy plains, dim-gleaming across whose far horizon is seen the sledge of the solitary traveller,—the ice-covered seas that heave and crackle with the ground swell-of the storm beneath—the magnificence of gigantic icebergs, glittering with all the colours of the rainbow, and announcing their coming by the ice-blink with which they illumine the sky,—the shooting coruscations of the north,—sun and moon, now shining with strangely redoubled orb, now obscured in dim eclipse,—fogs that may be felt,—the darkness of the long night,—the bright icy sunshine of the returning day,—nature, in short, in all her gloomiest and most awful aspects;—and peopling these scenes, lending a moral interest to this snowy desert, stand the forms of those simple-hearted patriarchs, who visited its shores, inspired by a spirit of enterprise purer and nobler than any which animated the breasts of Gama and Columbus, anxious only for a moral conquest;—

encountering perils, hardships, and death, without the world's sympathy or applause, on a theatre the most and barren under the sun, with no spectator but the unseen eye, no prompter but the inward voice of duty and conscience.

We know not how it may be with our readers, but 'Greenland' stirs our hearts and imagination, with its verses of grace, and its images of grandeur; and suggests to us more than it says, which is the invariable characteristic of all highest forms of poetry, of art, or of literature; there they rise before us, mountains with peaks of fire, and crests of snow; the distant sparkle of the ice-blink's spangled diadem; the rushing of the meteors across the firmament, where they "blaze like wrecks of a dissolving sun," or flame over the concave, till Orion and all the constellations look pale by the glare of those mysterious torches. The poet has realized to the eye the awfulness, the desolation, of the Tartarian Hall, the extinct volcano, where fire and ice have mingled to prop a thousand pillars, huge and strange, with their grotesque and fantastic forms; where the imprisoned waters hiss and growl, and breathe forth their volumes of steam, till the sun pours his glory over the hideous arches of the awful cathedral, and the touch of his enchantment transforms the cumbrous folds of fog into the rich drapery of the gorgeous rainbow; realizing the wild dreams of the Icelandic Scalds, and seeming to the inflamed imagination too monstrous for aught else than the curtain of the palace of Odin. These are the regions Montgomery has with wonderful vigour and life painted, where

"The Kraken, monarch of the sea,
Wallows abroad in his immensity."

Hecla's triple peaks, and meteor lights, the region where, like ghosts, the spectral splendours fly the day; the region, "the carcass of an old chimera dead.

And of this poem there are few passages of modern poetry more thrilling than the description of the ship lost in the ice, on the coast of Greenland, a vessel embedded in the realm of frost; its sails hanging like expanded glass, in transverse ropes, strung with the grotesque pearls of the icicle; amongst that range of awful alpine glaciers, stretching to the Pole; and there the brave seaboy, child of the old seafaring father, sprung of a race of rovers over the sea, from the cottage on the Norwegian shores—alas! brave son, now writhed round the mast, sepulchred in thin air. The poet has caught the imagery of the possible fate of the Archbishop of Drontheim, who was ordained bishop, but of whose arrival to his icy diocese no intelligence was ever received. The poet has conceived, with a vigour of conception

seldom surpassed, "how they felt as by a charm their ship stand still," and how

"The madness of the wildest gale that blows,
Were mercy to that shudder of repose."

We see each solemn petrification at his post; how the venerable and holy man breathes from his marble lips unuttered prayer; how his beard of driven snow rises spectrally before our eye, the unbroken clouds of stormy purple overhanging his view, as in answer to his straining sight, receiving the full glory of the emerging sun pouring the full quiver of his arrowy rays, turns the smitten rocks into diamonds; while round the expiring saint it seemed as if in those burning visions the gates of Paradise were opened to receive his soul.

"'Tis flown,
The glory vanishes, and over all,
Cimmerian darkness spreads her funeral pall."

There through all revolving ages lies embedded the undecaying ship; everlasting ice congealing the peopled deck.

"From age to age increased with annual snow,
This new Mont Blanc among the clouds may glow;
Whose conic peak, that earliest greets the dawn,
And latest from the sun's shut eye withdrawn,
Shall from the zenith thro' incumbent gloom
Burn like a lamp upon this naval tomb;
But when the archangel's trumpet sounds on high,
The pile shall burst to atoms through the sky,
And leave its dead upstarting at its call,
Naked and pale before the Judge of all."

It is not too much to regard this episode as one of the finest passages of modern poetry.

Our readers may still expect us to say something of the 'Pelican Island.' This poem is of quite another character to 'Greenland,' Perhaps it is a poem of a much loftier aim and characterized by more thought. As in 'Greenland' all the imagery has passed through the understanding, and therefore is imagination; this is indeed the stamp of the imagination, that it builds not from ephemeral emotion alone, but is the crystallization of the judgment and the feelings. If the 'Pelican Island' had been called the 'Course of Time,' it would have merited that compendious denomination, even more than the celebrated poem of Pollok. It is very kindling and thrilling to behold the coral rock and reef, gradually vested with verdure, then crowded with animal life,—then the home of immortal manhood,—then the temple

of praise to the Eternal. But in the development of this, the poet lays under contribution the whole realm of the beauties, harmonies, and sublimities of nature. The 'Pelican Island' is in fact a medallion of the world; it is a 'Bridgewater Treatise' in verse. It is—indeed its title does not describe it—it is the poetry of the natural history of creation,—it is the history of the transmigration of the soul,—it is the panorama of the crowding centuries from the early natal time—when

"Sky, sun, and sea, were all the universe."

It is the history of the changes wrought by the world's great actors, Time, Life, and Death. The poet supposes himself to move through all and over all, as an incorporeal form, all eye, ear, and thought, his existence, his enjoyment. The measure is peculiar, and while in blank verse, is exceedingly musical, and modulates strength and tenderness, with great harmony. It is the only poem of our author in which he approaches the metaphysician; but the metaphysics have a strong simplicity about them; they are wholly healthy, and yet suggest to the mind in brief and pointed phraseology the results. It is an essay on man, clothed in a radiant garment of Christian truth. All things are open to the poets' eye. *The landscape* spreading out beneath the wave—the *insects* that

"Lived deliciously on honey dews
And dwelt in palaces of blossomed bells."

Trees—

"The fruitful cocoa and the fragrant palm,
Like an old eagle, feathered to the heel:
The mighty mangrove which, at full-moon flood,
Appeared itself a wood upon the waters."

The serpent terribly beautiful, lying wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels, fit for a tyrant's brow, he moving through the old forest remnants standing like Tadmore's pillars in the wilderness. *The firmament* where

"Star after star, from some unseen abyss,
Came thro' the sky like thoughts into the mind,
We know not whence: till all the firmament
Was thronged with constellations, and the sea
Strewn with their images."

The storm—

"When the wind
Unprisoned blew, its trumpet loud and shrill
Out flashed the lightning gloriously;—the rain
Came down like music, and the full-toned thunder
Rolled in grand harmony throughout high heaven."

The sea at night—

“ Whose waves were spangled with phosphoric fire,
As tho’ the lightnings there had spent their shafts,
And left their fragments glittering on the field.”

All these do not occur as mere description, they are parts of the great cosmical picture. The poem is eminently a Christian cosmos.

The flying fish—

“ The joyous creature vaulting thro’ the air ;
The aspiring fish, that fain would be a bird,
On long light wings, that flung a diamond shower
Of dewdrops round my evanescent form.”

“ *The revelry that reigned at sunset,*” when the

“ Spouting whales projected watery columns,
That turn’d to arches at their height, and seemed
The skeletons of crystal palaces.”

All these are not material paintings, they exist in this noble poem, in their normal proportions, and suggest the question—

“ Why ? ” said my thoughts within me, “ Why this waste
Of loveliness and grandeur unenjoyed ?
Is there no soul throughout this fair existence ?—
Sky, sun, and sea, the moon, the stars, the clouds,
Wind, lightning, thunder, are but ministers ;
They know not what they are, nor what they do :
Oh, for the beings for whom these were made ! ”

This seems to us a glorious poem ; it has never received its deserved meed of praise. How thin and frail the barrier is which separates the loftiest of human performances from what will be regarded merely as the noble and happy efforts of genius. The ‘ Pelican Island ’ is one of the most noble and the most happy, but it is not loftiest. Its materials are most colossal. But the architecture is not equal to the stone. The design had needed an Epic magnificence of conception, and perhaps the disciplined chastity of Montgomery’s mind prevented his work from rising to the vast wholeness which it suggests ; for indeed, Titanic shadows fall over the pages as we read ; and to compare the suggestions with any one of Moore’s Works, which this exploit hints, would be to compare, at the very best, a sea-shell casually thrown on the shore, with the magnificent Ailsa Crag, holding in his sceptre the lightnings, or the Bass Rock, clasped in the ring of the eternal thunder-crowned sea, with all its associations of martyrs and of graves. But the strength

of Montgomery is not to be seen in his longer poems; like Wordsworth, although less profound in his insight, his gift is mainly in his power to throw a charm over common objects; he beheld all things as hallowed; if, in one word, we were to describe him, we should speak of him as the poet who gave happy turns to things. All things awoke within him the instincts of his holy faith; his ardent love to the Saviour. No doubt at last it became habitual with him; and although it is so likely to receive a sneer, a sweet consecrating habit it was too. It was in his short verses his great power was at once concealed and revealed; they are like the dewdrops sparkling and alive with purity and electricity. His mastery over the structure of these verses was most eminent, whether for suggestion or expression, and, indeed, it must have been full in him, and equal to the rousing the passion of terror or of fears. We have always thought his lines on the celebrated verses of Moore, "This world is all a fleeting show,"—posthumous verses, very illustrative—

"O world, the worldling cannot know
Thy splendour and thy worth;
Thou art not 'all a fleeting show,'
There's yet a joy on earth:

"Thy glory is the flower of grass,
Thy beauty morning dew;
The sparkle or the bloom may pass,
'Tis fleeting,—yet 'tis true."

We have already described much of this poetry of Montgomery, as the poetry of happy turns. Give the poet a word—the faintest hint, and it is to him a suggestion; the penalty of this sometimes was, that such a suggestion launched him on what was almost poetic triviality. It was too easy to him to write; he had with his real feeling, and sensitiveness, the vice of elegance; he yielded himself too much to the first impression which met him, for his verse. His verses, 'Speed the Prow,' have often been quoted; the *Edinburgh Review* truly remarks, that the voyage of life is one of the most hackneyed of themes; but Montgomery touches it, and the crowding sails, shrouds, and lighthouse, give originality to the solemn picture.

Not the ship that swiftest saileth,
But which longest holds her way
Onward, onward, never faileth,
Storm and calm, to win the day;
Earliest she the haven gains,
Which the hardest stress sustains.

O'er life's ocean, wide and pathless,
Thus would I with patience steer;
No vain hope of journeying seathless,
No proud boast to face down fear;
Dark or bright his Providence,
Trust in GOD be my defence.

Time there was,—'tis so no longer,—
When I crowded every sail,
Battled with the waves, and stronger
Grew, as stronger grew the gale;
But my strength sunk with the wind,
And the sea lay dead behind.

There my bark had founder'd surely,
But a Power invisible
Breathed upon me;—then securely,
Borne along the gradual swell,
Helm, and shrouds, and heart renew'd,
I my humble course pursued.

Now, though evening shadows blacken,
And no star comes through the gloom,
On I move, nor will I slacken
Sail, though verging tow'rs the tomb;
Bright beyond,—on heaven's high strand,
Lo, the lighthouse!—land, land, land!

Cloud and sunshine, wind and weather,
Sense and sight are fleeing fast;
Time and tide must fail together,
Life and death will soon be past;
But where day's last spark declines,
Glory everlasting shines.

Few writers, we suppose, wrote so much in those endless nuisances, Albums, but he wrote ordinarily well; thus, his lines *on a gnat* accidentally crushed, and fixed on the blank page. It was enough. And the following lines were written in pencil round the dead insect.

Lie here embalm'd, from age to age;
This is the album's noblest page,
Though every glowing leaf be fraught
With painting, poetry, and thought;
Where tracks of mortal hands are seen,
A hand invisible hath been,
And left this autograph behind,
This image from the eternal Mind;
A work of skill, surpassing sense,
A labour of Omnipotence;
Though frail as dust it meet thine eye,
He formed this gnat who built the sky.

Stop—lest it vanish at thy breath,
This speck had life, and suffer'd death.

A spirit of conscious holiness, and reverence, stirred his imagination in every effort of his pen ; it is most interesting to notice his lines in the Album of Dora Wordsworth, the beloved daughter of the poet ; and it is pleasant to notice too the regard which Wordsworth entertained for the poet of Sheffield.

“ To William Wordsworth, Esq.

“ Immortal offspring thou wilt leave behind,
To track the waves, and travel on the wind ;
In lettered forms o'er every land to spread,
Where mind expatiates or where fancy's bred ;
Companions of the fair, the wise, the good,
For us their mother-tongue is understood,
Long as their father-spirit shall inspire
Heart-hid emotion, soul-expanding fire,
And, like the elements of nature, give
Life to things dead—life's life to things that live.

“ But thou hast offspring nobler far than these,
Born to survive the heavens, the earth, the seas ;
And she to whom this precious book belongs,
Shall yet be more immortal than thy songs :
These, though they bear through every age and clime
Thy name and praise till the last breath of Time,
Yet must their written scroll, when he expires,
Drop from his hand into the final fires.
Oh ! then may she, like morning from the womb
Of darkness, issuing from her long night-tomb,
Behold the terror with rejoicing eyes,
Caught up to meet her Saviour in the skies,
And with his saints, a glorious company,
Hold round the throne eternal jubilee !

“ This for thy daughter, Wordsworth, is my prayer :
Next for thyself—mayest thou that mercy share,
Nor one that either loves be wanting there !

J. M.”

This power over happy turns and allusions, is seen in the following ‘ Wedding Wish,’ founded on the fact that the polar star, seen through a powerful telescope, appears to be two, very near together.

The cynosure of midnight skies
Appears but one to seamen's eyes,
Yet twain there are,
And each a star,—
Perhaps a sun :—
May you, my friends, reverse the view,
And while on earth you look like Two,
From heaven be seen as One ;
Yea, like that polar symbol be
A double star of constancy.

The poems of Montgomery contain a great number of remarkable lines, thus the well-known lines on *the Daisy*.

“There is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.
On waste, or woodland, rock and plain,
Its humble buds unheeded rise;
The Rose has but a summer's reign,
The Daisy never dies.”

As he passes the portrait of the lady unknown, the now famous *Incognita*, the beautiful being, whose portrait of ‘one unknown,’ now adorns his works, but dead even ages ago, with what power he stirs the soul by his own impressions.

“The dead are like the stars by day,
Withdrawn from mortal eye,
But, not extinct, they hold their way
In glory thro’ the sky.”

How noble are the lines with which he closes his fine succession of *thoughts and images*, in which *the being of God*, improved by nature, is affirmed by the being of man.

“Is there a God? all Nature shows
There is;—and yet no mortal knows!
The mind that could this truth conceive,
Which brute sensation never taught,
No longer to the dust would cleave,
But grow immortal at the thought.”

The rainbow suggests well known lines.

“For see! on Death's bewildering wave
The rainbow Hope arise,
A bridge of glory o'er the grave,
That bends beyond the skies.

From earth to Heaven it swells and shines,
The pledge of bliss to man;
Time with Eternity combines,
And grasps them in a span.”

And the ‘Grave,’ in the volume of poetry which excited the insipid scorn and contempt of the *Edinburgh Review*, has some verses which should have disarmed all criticisms.

There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found,
They softly lie and sweetly sleep
Low in the ground.

The storm that wrecks the winter sky
 No more disturbs their deep repose,
 Than summer-evening's latest sigh
 That shuts the rose.

* * * *

The Soul, of origin Divine,
 GOD'S glorious image, freed from clay,
 In heaven's eternal sphere shall shine
 A star of day.

The SUN is but a spark of fire,
 A transient meteor in the sky;
 The SOUL, immortal as its Sire,

SHALL NEVER DIE.

We are compelled to forego for another opportunity, a department of the genius of Montgomery,—his voice in the temple and the Church. Referring to this, we can have little hesitation in regarding him as the chief Christian poet of our country in our age; but here we must leave him and the subject for further analysis, and perhaps criticism.

II.

FINE ENGLISH; OR THOUGHTS ON WRITING AND PREACHING.

“**I**N our present style of English, it is only the gentleman and the labourer who can thoroughly understand each other—who use, on the whole, the same terms in describing any occurrence; while your ‘able editors,’ your reporters, and those for whom they cater, talk a language which the gentleman never uses, and which the labourer cannot understand.” Such is the dictum of the *captious weekly Critic*, and others of his tribe. Now we are by no means disposed to give in on all points to this caustic gentleman, whom old *Ebony* once so well described as—

“One Mr. Bilious Prig,
 An old-young fellow with false teeth,
 And a very youthful wig,
 Who got bonnetted by a Scotchman—”

for his unceasing and unscrupulous abuse of Sir William

Wallace, the Scottish Lion with the hat on, and other things about which the men 'over the border' are touchy.

We should like, first of all, to be quite clear what his definition of a gentleman is: we fancy it would involve the possession, if married, of at least £2000 a-year (it is not "gentlemanly" to venture on matrimony with less); or of chambers in some good quarter, the entrée to the best society, and unlimited license to say what he likes of all that he sees or hears there, if single. Now this idea of a gentleman, we make bold to assert, is infinitely worse than the wildest notions of those who talk at times most arrant stuff about "nature's gentlemen." Still let us learn what we can from the reviewer's strictures; and let us confess with sorrow that the tendency to grandiose writing does seem deplorably on the increase in books and papers intended for the half-educated classes. Those who are themselves less familiar with composition naturally fly to "fine writing." To a certain extent it is true in all arts, that the earliest efforts are far more ambitious than anything attempted after the rudiments are mastered. Just watch a child drawing, and see how he unhesitatingly portrays every incident; so that his picture, along with his own very needful running comment, forms quite a little history; and then note the self-distrust of the same child when he has had a course of lessons in a school of art. Or see the marvels which a village artist sometimes attempts on a sign-board, and then cease to wonder why those who can least use them to good purpose are often fondest of the hardest words and phrases. The temptation must be stronger here than in any other art; for words seem far easier to handle than colours, or even than black-lead pencils. It is not all conceit (as the critic-tribe would have us believe), and the desire to show their superior knowledge, which leads people to revel in long words and magniloquent sentences; it is often the same feeling which leads the child to put into his sketch everything that comes into his head, no matter whether he can draw its shape or not—the feeling, viz. of pure pleasure in the exercise of a new art, in our use of which we have not yet received a check. Do not be too hard then, on those who, in humbler life, are fond of using the grand style. Don't try to accommodate your speech to theirs. If you weed your sentences of all but "the pure Saxon," they will stare, and by-and-by begin to suspect you are quizzing them, and so either get angry, or else good-humouredly throw out a few clenchers of portentous length, recklessly misapplied, just to prove to you that you need not flatter yourself; you must condescend in that sort of way to the level of their intellects. As it used to be with sermons, when the good old

woman for instance, "didn't like the Bishop half so well as our curate, for she could understand all his lordship said, while, Lord bless you, mum, Mr. Dovekin does talk fine, just like a book, it does one good to hear 'un,"—so it is now with much besides: the "pure unmixed speech of our Saxon forefathers," is far harder to write, and far less acceptable to the many, than a more florid style. And why, after all, should we go back to the Saxons in speech any more than in anything else? There needs a protest against this retrograde movement, at any rate, when, as in our reviewers (who, by the way, preach simplicity without being over studious about practising it), it is so offensively mixed up with social questions—made in fact quite a class matter.

It was at Oxford, some sixteen years ago more or less, that men began to lift up their voice against all but one of the elements of our mixed English. They were met by the objection: "You cannot be Saxon in all your language;" and it used to be a good joke to give the promoters of "the movement" some hard bit of scientific phraseology to do into vernacular: thus we remember "the impenetrability of matter" being desperately rendered, "the unthoroughfaresomeness of stuff." But this no one thinks of attempting now: though the technical language of the Germans shows that it may be carried out to a great extent, and though the vast increase of *needless* scientific words of foreign origin makes one regret that it was not adopted here, too, when we began to be a scientific nation. What the reviewers are right in finding fault with is the tendency (they call it a growing tendency,—but of this anon) to call a wife a *lady*, a school an *academy* or a *collegiate institution*, a household an *establishment*, and the like; the style of the penny-a-liner, who must call the lightning "*the electric fluid*," and speaking of an execution tells us that the "body hung quivering in mid air, a fearful record of the *cravings of offended YET retributive justice*." It is a very silly practice: though we cannot stomach the undeservedly bitter way in which it is stigmatized, nor at all acquiesce in the contempt which is hurled at the head of every one who falls into it.

People take to the practice for various reasons. There are the uneducated, who do so, as we said, chiefly out of the mere natural delight which one has in the use of something new; who love in fact to make a flourish, as a boy might with a broadsword. Then again there are the half-educated, whose duty it frequently becomes to write works on their own special subject.

Scholars in England very rarely write except on scholarly themes. We are constantly being told that a thoroughly good

University education is the only proper basis on which to build any after scientific knowledge whatsoever. Very true, doubtless ; but still, untrained men will be impertinent enough to turn out good geologists, or chemists, 'invitâ Minervâ;' and, after all, what a small percentage of classmen from the English Universities do build this superstructure, how many rest satisfied with the material rewards to which their University success has led ; how very few of the remainder give us books like Professor Kingsley's "Glaucus, or the Wonders of the Seashore," books which detail in unexceptionable English the latest discoveries of the naturalist. And so it is that scientific works are often clumsily, sometimes pompously, written ; the writers, being practical men, lack that ripe scholarly experience, which alone can rival the simple inborn grace that charms us in a very few writers. Thus some have found Dr. Mantell wordy and pretentious ; not a few have accused Mr. Gosse of being namby-pamby ; and even poor Hugh Miller, the wonderful stonecutter—(for whom there is so much more excuse), is thought by many to overlay most of his elaborate passages with too rich a word-colouring.

Far worse than these are the people who deliberately use grand language because it pays. The vendors of quack medicines do so, just as they silver their pills, and use Greek mottoes (*σφαιρία ιατρικὰ τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀρίστα*, says a Bath druggist, suiting, we suppose, his style to the tastes of those who claim for their idle city the title of the Athens of the West). Advertisers in general use the grand style, and abuse it ; they find their account in so doing, because five people out of six have, in spite of themselves, a sort of faith in what they see in print, and at times find themselves looking on the advertiser as to some extent a kind of disinterested third party. *Writers* too, very often give way to the fatal facility of fine writing ; they do it for the sake of "padding" an article. Of course, to your penny-a-liner it is meat and drink, and tobacco as well : it is he who in a great measure keeps it going—who constantly drives it to fresh extravagances.

Then many whose English style is still conformed, are spoiled by taking up too early with French literature. What is, it seems, accepted as very good indeed in French, becomes the merest metaphor run-mad, the intolerable rant, or the vaguest enigma, when done into literal English. Besides affecting translators (a large class) this indirectly touches those whom critics call "able editors,"—and has had indeed a good deal to do with the formation of that conventional style wherein "leaders" are generally written, and which ranges from

very good to very bad, but is in all cases something *sui generis*.

No doubt there are, besides these, many who use long five-syllable words as a cloak for ignorance, who speak in grand generalities because they have no specific knowledge, or else talk fine because they think it fine to do so; and there are, again, others, fairly instructed, who affect an exaggerated Johnsonianism from prejudice or self-important conceit. But the professionals (as in most things) leave these amateurs long chinks behind.

Perhaps the acmé in this style has been reached by the guide-book makers. We have now before us the New Handbook to Wuzzton-super-Mud, from which incomparable production we must make an extract or two.

"To enumerate the diseases on which this climate exercises a beneficial influence, would be to specify nearly 'all the ills that flesh is heir to.' Health-seeking residents of neighbouring towns, have gradually been arriving at the belief, that the fair nymph scatters her rosy treasures more profusely where old Ocean daily rolls his tide on the silvery sands, or laves the rocks with his surging billows, than she does at those inland spots, where in former times they were wont to woo her fond caress."

Of a fact—"this sacred relic, so highly interesting, so *suggestive of swelling thoughts*, as we cast a retrospective glance on the darkness and misery of our race, ere the nativity of that system of benevolence, to which it is as it were the portal, is still devoted to its original purpose, though Saxon serf, or Norman baron, or mailed knight, that made their baptismal vows here in days of old, have passed away."

A church-wall spotted with monuments is:—"rich in the storied sorrow of the funereal memorial, appealing to our sympathies with whatever is grand and pathetic in man, harmonizing with the serene and solemn atmosphere of the Christian temple."

Old Britons are "these ancient worthies;" three pages further, monks are "clerical worthies;" villages "nestle beneath the luxuriant shade;" a guide is of course "a cicerone;" friars "dine in a collegiate manner;" cliffs "nod ruin on the head of the gazing spectator;" a glen is "a vast abruption," and Cheddar cheese has been compared to the productions of the "vats of Parma."

We are let in for etymology too, and that of the most eclectic kind: "*Kwech* being CELTIC for *boat*, and *stoke* SAXON for a *station*, (!)" * is shown "to have possessed an importance in the by-gone history of Britain, long before the fair Queen of the West had disclosed her medicinal springs, or Bristowe's sons had reared her battlemented walls."

After such a falling off from old glories, we need strong consolation; and it is administered in the following form: "On the side of that hill,

*A village, which, with laudable impartiality, combines such divers words.

where erst the painted savage triumphed over his foe, or fell beneath his arm, there arose a simple temple to the living God."

But, almost every page is a choice sample of how the English language may be perverted for no conceivable purpose, except to drive the weather-bound visitor melancholy-mad, and so get up a case for the Wuzzton doctors. Do these writers think that any one, be he ever so benighted, would not rather have a good plain shilling's worth, than such a farrago? Would he not surely prefer more facts, and fewer sublime reflections? Ah, but there's the rub; facts require some sort of research; sublime reflections require nothing but the courage to make the requisite "flourish."

Then for the places described; do you think that one person more per annum visits the damp and dolorous village of Cow-soke-under-the-Hill, because the handbook lavishes on it and its mean tumble-down church, full of whitewash and high pews, some of its choicest flowers of rhetoric?

Visitors buy the local guide-book because it comes in their way (though many, sick of the windy stuff with which the prophets of the land fill them, are getting content with a meagre but solid meal from Murray or Black); they visit the local lions, as few or as many as it falls to their lot to see—all of them, perhaps, if a very energetic mamma or aunt, indefatigable in improving the minds of all about her, is of the party; but certainly not one more do they go to, for what it really is, is hidden by a page and a-half of fustian in the book, on which they have lately wasted their shilling and their time.

What then is the use of fine writing? Would men buy fewer country papers if the articles were written in ordinary English, just as we suppose they would buy less of Horniman's tea, but for the protean forms in which the record of its excellences are continually kept before their eyes? It is very well for an advertisement to become a sort of printed kaleidoscope; we are not all obliged to keep reading it; but why should our brain be dazzled at breakfast time, and our sense of the fitness of things disturbed, by the meteoric glare and sparkle which our editor thinks it needful to keep up through three columns and a-half?

Besides, morally, fine writing can do no good, but only harm: it is getting people into a bad habit to let them use language the exact force of which they have not accurately measured. It is as bad in an "able editor," as for any other tradesman to give uncertain weight. When we stop to think, we know very well that the advertiser does not mean what he says by his "puff sublime;" and so a general sense of unreality gets

fostered which is very different from what downright honest speech should aim at conveying.

We do not believe that "talking grand" is a growing evil: we think it is getting less on this side the Atlantic, at least; but fine writing still fills our penny papers, our cheap magazines, far too many even of our children's books. At Dr. Johnson's door lies a great deal of the fault; but part belongs to the age just passing away, the age when everybody thought he ought to know something of all the 'ologies, the age of diffusions of useful knowledge, which, in not a few instances, became confusions of all sorts of knowledge.

Some have said the Scotch are most of all prone to this vice of composition, which makes turbid "the well of English undefiled." Surely the land of Chalmers and Guthrie (not to speak of Thomas Carlyle, who has given Englishmen a new style which they imitate in servile herds) need not fear a comparison of styles before fitting judges. No, it is not a national failing, but a failing which most besets young writers, and in Scotland there are more *young* writers than in England. Well: *fus est ab poste doceri*; and all young writers may well learn from the captious reviewer, that a false Johnsonianism and laboured pomposity are as easy as they are worthless, just as to write round text is by no means so difficult, and by no means so generally useful as to write a good running-hand.

But however hard we are, and justly so, on pretentious and bombastic writing, and grand words used "to look fine," do let us deal with the subject without that bitterness which would make it (as we said) a social question. There are heaps of very vulgar underbred persons, who think to show off by using very fine words; and simple phrase (being simply the best) does mostly mark the best man; but we will never have it said, that to use the grand style is necessarily the sign of a low vulgar taste; we know many honest sturdy peasants, many worthy farmers, the very reverse of "underbred," who rather luxuriate in the occasional use of five-syllable words. Your critic refers to the whole English-speaking world, what is probably true in the main, of a certain class in London, and of a few besides.

The social question is dragged in by the ears, to show what thorough gentlemen we reviewers are, and how we scent out a snob by his stray expressions.

Lord Macaulay perhaps seemed to sneer a little (in his chapter on Social Changes) at the Glasgow shopman or sempstress who runs off to enjoy the beauties of Loch Katrine, instead of strutting about the streets in frilled shirt or silk stockings. He only seemed to sneer; but now every scribbler who pays no tax direct or indirect, except on the beer and tobacco, of both of

which he probably consumes more than is good for him, takes up the same line, and speaks as if we *ought* to have one English for vulgar people and another for gentlemen and working-men.

Surely after all, manners which "make the man" consist in deeds rather than talk. At any rate, the most inflated fine language is better than coarse language; and to judge by some recent productions, we may come back to that if we don't take care. Why, even in writing to friends, the "polite letter writer" style, which we have probably ninety-nine of every hundred of us quite outgrown, was surely preferable in many respects to that "terse and nervous" but decidedly gross style which girls, as well as young men, are taking up with now, and which, if it is a natural reaction from the other, is decidedly a reaction which has overshot the just mean. True graces of diction are quite distinct from the peacock's feathers of wordy pomposity; but your jay at any rate showed a due appreciation of his native ugliness; whereas the racy style of those who call their father the "relieving officer" and so forth, is the jay's cry asserting superiority over the note of the nightingale.

One kind of fine writing we are bound specially to animadvert upon—the religious. The love of grand and stilted phraseology, here alas! runs riot unchecked. The evil is so universal, so deep-seated, that any other subject-matter would be quite spoiled by it. Scarcely a sermon, not a religious biography, but is more or less touched. The grandiloquent has grown to be the popular and recognized style in writing on religious topics, and such books as "Heaven our Home" (we say not a word about their *matter*) tend, by their style, to spread and perpetuate the evil. But while we have books of *religious instruction* like many now in use, the evil is sure to be a growing one; the charm of simple language runs risk of being destroyed at the outset, the delight which children have in scriptural plainness is likely to be nipped in the bud.

We have before us a *Manual of Scripture History*, by the Rev. J. E. Riddle, M.A., Incumbent of St. John's, Leckhampton. Our intention is not at all to criticise the amount of judgment or research displayed in the *matter* of this work, or to inquire what may be its title to supersede the good old Dr. Watts' Catechism; we would merely call attention to its *manner* as bearing on the subject in hand, and express our regret at the quaint pompously familiar style which the Oxford M.A., quondam Bampton Lecturer, has thought fit to substitute for the words of Holy Writ. It is really too bad to talk of Job as "*an extensive and wealthy agriculturalist*;" to speak of the 'sons of God' (Gen. vi.), as "*men for the most part of personal piety*;" to

tell us of "*Esau's matrimonial connections*;" and to turn the grand pregnant words of Moses, "another king arose which knew not Joseph," into such fustian as the following—"that is to say, a new dynasty was established, the representatives of which set no value upon the past services of *this ancient member of the Hebrew race*." Fancy an English scholar, writing for those whose style is still unformed, telling us that "Hagar, in prospect of being the *maternal ancestor of the promised posterity, behaved with a degree of insolence*," &c. (p. 27). After this we can scarcely wonder at the Temptation being styled "a personal inauguration of our Lord's human nature in the way of a victorious contest with evil," or that the Pharisees instead of trying to "take Him in His talk," sought to "*entrap Him in His conversation*."

In the preface we are told that this book is being largely adopted in schools. We may well ask what sort of sermons will the grown people approve of, who have been nourished during schooltime on such strangely seasoned food. Surely nothing a whit less *fine* than Mr. Bellew will satisfy the longings of their middle age. Our consolation is, that we have large faith in the want of perception of the British boy; else we should be grieved indeed to think that he was being taught to call David's dancing before the ark a "*transaction*," and Joseph's life, "*an historico-prophetical symbol of Christ*."

A word to young ministers: whatever you are, be natural. It was not by pompous phraseology, or inverted sentences, or metaphors run mad, that the old masters of style won imperishable renown, and fixed for ever by their example, what should henceforth be deemed perfection.

A work on preaching, published in America, and recently noticed in this Review, gives (in what it commends as well as in what it blames) many examples of what we should avoid. Never *affect* singularity, because it seems likely to win you a few fresh hearers, or to rouse the flagging attention of some who threaten to desert you. If singularity of any kind is natural to you, you will naturally adopt it; your hearers will (if you keep your peculiarity within due limits) feel that it is natural for you to speak as you do. But never be tempted to ape tricks of style or manner; the man who does so has surely already begun to lose his sense of the overpowering solemnity of the message with which he is charged. What tells in the long run is the forcible energetic exposition of the truth. Let this be your aim—not singularity, above all things, not merely *fine language*. A kid-glove preacher, whose phrases (like his hands) are enwrapped in dainty coverings, surely such an one is not the proper man to deliver what Paul preached, and what all the noble com-

pany whose names are written in Heaven, have since expounded. One of the early fathers is called *Chrysostom* the golden-mouthed; but he does not owe his name to a florid style, or to grandiose wordy perorations. Look at his sermons: the dross of superfluity is all purged out from them. They are simple, in parts, even conversational, and abounding in anecdote. The *fine gold* is his thorough earnestness: that is what gave him such power over men's attentions, over their hearts, in the old time; that is what even now holds the reader enthralled.

Under whatever circumstances then we may be disposed to make excuses for *fine English*, we will make none for it when uttered from the pulpit. Let us have simplicity there at least. The opposite habit is a snare against which education ought more and more to protect the young aspirant to the ministry.

Men of the Established Church are found to say that this vice of grandiloquence is a special weakness among Dissenters, and surely many a preacher (many a young local preacher above all) has given plenty of occasion for the sneer. Strange that it should be so; strange that plainer doctrines, simpler forms of worship, should seek, as it were, to make up for their plainness in turgid or affected language. But there is yet time to mend; for, as the habit is far from being confined to Nonconformists, so it is far from being universal among them. There are multitudes of preachers who are still uninfected, who still (reading the best models, and depending on Divine teaching) use good plain racy English speech. The fault is, as we said above, a fault of the present age, or rather of the age which is just passing away. All the preacher has to do is to take care that he is not the last to return to that singular style, of which his Bible,—that “well of English undefiled”—gives him the most perfect models. The use of formulas may save the trouble of thinking about the message to be delivered, but surely the gain will be at the expense of vitality. Fine phrases may take with “itching ears,” with empty minds, but to win the thoughtful, half-educated artisan, too often disposed to freethinking; to bring over and *keep* the men whom Christians of all parties should address themselves to—the young men, we mean, of all classes—we must have, not idle rhodomontade, not continual talking “*about it, and about it,*” but something solid and to the point.

The French say of a good style, it is *incisive*; the word may rouse some who seem to have forgotten that as God's Word in Scripture “*is sharper than any two-edged sword,*” even such (after their ability) must be the words of His messengers.

III.

CONGREGATIONALISM UPON ITS TRIAL.*

WE should certainly like to see some shrewd and sensible pamphlet or tract, such as that we have placed at the head of this article extensively circulated, with the knowledge that it was as extensively read as circulated throughout our Congregational churches; we know the author of 'The Customs of the Dissenters,' and can respect him thoroughly as a fearless and outspoken man; but we suppose wits are usually unjust, inasmuch as they always hang out their truth upon an angle, and there is much here we could have wished altogether unsaid, and as much we could have wished said in a different manner; the author is a man with his eyes open, no doubt, but in many things he seems to have overstated both the defects and the dangers of the Congregational system, and upon some points we are openly and at once at issue with him;—of course we know we are doing a foolish thing in arguing with a satirist, but we fear the book will not do much to convert any of the guilty parties among us from the errors of their ways, and there is a good deal in it that would rejoice the hearts of such ingenuous persons as the authors of 'David Elginbrod,' the 'Chronicles of Carlingford,' or able Saturday Reviewers: we shall be glad, however, to know that the little work is being generally read. Certainly there is conceit and wrong-headedness enough among us needing severe and caustic rebuke. But we are unable to see that we have suggested to us here any real methods of improvement. The faults of our system are mercilessly exposed and lashed; we must also think they are exaggerated, but there is no law or method announced by which the evils may be overcome,—not a hint of an improved plan. We greatly fear the author has not seen the working of the Congregational system to advantage, but this may not perhaps be the fault of the system. We heard so much commendation of these papers as they appeared from time to time in the pages of the 'Christian Spectator,' that we were considerably disappointed upon their perusal; there is in them a vein of undeserved unreasoning and unreasonable bitterness—what a picture is this of one of our churches.

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- *1. *The Customs of the Dissenters: being Seven Papers revised and reprinted from the "Christian Spectator."* Elliot Stock.
 2. *Independency: a Deduction from the Laws of the Universe.* By Evan Lewis, B.A., F.R.E.S. Elliot Stock.
 3. *Sketches of Churches and Characters,* by the Rev. William Jeffrey, Amersham. Houlston and Stoneman.

But when a so-called Church of Jesus Christ becomes a "chamber of horrors," where a crowd of vulgar and ignorant pretenders are struggling to seem each as good as the others; where those who have little book-knowledge and less common-sense are setting up as judges on all questions human and Divine; where the piety of servant girls is exhibited by copying the attire, and scoffing at the commands, of their mistresses who are of the same communion; where the labouring-man, got up "regardless of expense" in his Sunday best, is making a weekly endeavour, by the impertinent familiarity of his speech, to compel all of superior station to feel that they have found their match in this impudent and 'godly' democrat; where Sunday-school teachers, and singers, and little shopkeepers, are banded together in a perpetual conspiracy for the mortification of all that is broader in thought, purer in taste, or nobler in aspiration, under some pretence of special devotion to a privilege,—when such scenes as these are beheld, there has been some corruption of the right idea of Christian equality.

Now we will be bold to say the writer has never known a church of this fashion. Spiteful things are sure to be pleasant to some people, and small as the volume is, it is full of muck like this, which can never be likely to amend the faults the writer exposes, if they exist. It is spiteful writing: the writer evidently has no great love for Dissenters; and he most surely forgets what it is that has made, and very greatly still makes, Dissent. There is a cause why these people have strayed from "the fold:" they have been compelled to seek for themselves spiritual nutrition—they have been left to their own guidings for ages—no man met them, or led them; and it is not to be supposed that traditions—long acquired, are in a moment to be torn up. There were many points of beauty the writer might have found among the customs of Dissenters—not one of these has he noticed. Satire may find powder and spark for its squibs, in all things human. Non-conformity in its simplicity expresses the fact of the human mind recoiling from priestly, prelatical, and political despotism, and seeking after God; and we are all unable to see in our writer's sentiments anything that would not tend to degrade devotion, by materializing it and reducing its spirituality to a servile enslavement to sensual forms.

We confess, however, at once to a feeling that things among us demand earnest and vigilant handling. Let no Church of England able editor suppose that while we are saying this, he catches us on the hip, nor look on "the things of others" till he has reformed his own. In consequence of the slight provision made by the Establishment for teaching at all proportioned to the intelligence of the times; Nonconformist congregations present a very different aspect to what they presented half-a-century since. In all our great towns, and in other places (also, in large chapels) are gathered together large congregations. It was an easy

thing to provide, and to administer, both by teaching and church government, for Independent Churches in the old *régime* of things, but circumstances have greatly altered: in the old time, even within our recollection, to attend the Congregational meeting was itself almost 'a sign of a work of grace in the soul.' Our congregations now are of a much more miscellaneous character. The theory of an Independent Church is as perfect and pure as the theory of a Republic in politics; they both alike demand a very high type of character for their conduct and stability. The theory seems especially suited for small churches, and for large churches beneath special and favourable circumstances. It must be admitted that the New Testament leaves considerable scope and width for the application of expedients to varying emergencies. And we believe we are now brought to that crisis in our history, in which it is advisable that we gather all our strength to meet and cope with the difficulties of the times, while exercising the clearest vision in surveying them. Congregationalism is upon its trial—Church-of-Englandism is upon its trial too—the stream of opinion is flowing on, and it is bearing us—whither? We have reached a state of religious licentiousness. It is to be feared we have lost in many of our churches those first principles of a submission to a teaching authority; fear of error, and mistrust of our own judgments, they seem to be extinct; it is certain to our own apprehension, we need not alone the proclamation of some wider principles of freedom, but the halting firmly by some great conservative principles of church government. Mr. Lewis, in his little book on *Independency*, deduces the doctrine from the archetypal unity and variety in the universe, from the eccentricity of the ellipse, and the marvels of crystallization from the *Nepenthes Distillatoria* of China, and the *Dischidia (Raffles) iana* of the East Indies, &c., &c. Mr. Lewis, is no doubt, a well-informed man, and he says many things worth saying, but surely all this is the very wildness of pedantry. It is sufficient to find the law of *Independency* in the nature of the human mind, and in the life of the New Testament.

The author of 'The Customs of Dissenters' brings before his readers a number of matters bearing upon our well-being; and there are few customs which obtain among us, which do not need careful revision. The structure of our churches—the government and the discipline of the ministry,—our financial arrangements, our public worship; on all these matters we believe there are many thousands of people among us who are wishing and waiting for direction. There are, as we have intimated, customs and observations among us worthy of reproof and reprobation. It would be well for us all if we had some

more central principle of authority and appeal. There are groups of people whose salvation and desire seems to be to find some one to tell them exactly what they know—they do not want any preaching, and certainly no teaching. They make a sort of looking-glass of the preacher's heart, and see themselves therein, and approve the picture; and we are, no doubt, in danger from Committeeism; and we are in danger from men in the pulpit, emasculated into bookworms; and we are in danger from men in the pulpit who have never known or opened a book. Especially, we seem to lack the power of self-government once apparently more largely possessed—we believe only apparently, because exercised on so small a scale. But there are even more serious defects than these. There is a spirit in our midst which refuses to obey in any direction, in behalf of religion—"every man is a law to himself," "and does that which is right in his own eyes"—he may criticise a teacher who has devoted a life to the elucidation of the doctrine he attempts to unfold, although he himself never opens or reads the Scriptures. A man who knows nothing of mathematics or chemistry is compelled to admit it, and then come to an end, but no such modesty restrains most men in their treatment of revealed truth, or in their opinions with reference to church government, and it is to be feared that many alike in Nonconformists, and Established Churches continue their connection, knowing no more of the Christian religion or religious truth than Romulus or Remus, or a *Saturday Reviewer*,—simply to be an annoyance to the minister or the religious community.

With reference to church membership, we believe that our churches are far from the possession of that numerical strength which they might boast, arising from the peculiar and traditional severity supposed to be necessary for admission; the consequence is, that in most of our congregations the worshippers and seat-holders are most unnaturally and disproportionately larger than the church members. There are questions which need earnest discussing, and which must be discussed if we are to present that aspect of strength in numbers which we present in appearance and sympathy. The author of the book before us, we believe is very guilty of libel, when he says, "A gentleman of standing, or an accomplished young lady, would obtain admission into most Independent and Baptist churches rather more easily than a charwoman or a shopboy." Our experience does not at all endorse this uncharitable sentiment, we do not believe it at all. On the contrary, we have sometimes thought that the lust of power, which is the characteristic, not less of diminutive Dissenting deacons than of cabinet ministers, has been rather indisposed to the reception into the church of gentle-

men and men of character and intelligence, than innumerable "shopboys or charwomen." We have long felt that the rigid supervision exercised over the faith and experience of persons seeking church-fellowship, has little warrant from the Word of God; and we should be very glad to find any method by which our gate of admission might be widened, and our cords of discipline made more rigid. We sometimes think our method has been an opposite one; a rigid inquisition upon entering the church, and comparative carelessness of discipline after membership. Our method which excludes practically so large a mass of people as is found in our congregations, must be open to serious objection; not that we yield at all to the harsh impressions given in the little work before us. Our writer's antipathy to the "money-grubbing shopkeeper," is something like that of the Saturday Reviewer to the "Evangelical Drysalter," and as unreasonable. We have been connected with several Nonconformist churches as member and pastor, and we must say, that the "free-living wine-bibbing Dives of evangelical circles," "tattling empty-headed young ladies or gentlemen devoted to nothing else than concerts and fashionable trifles," "rich red-handed speculators or manufacturers," "railing idlers going from house to house mischief-making," and "disgracefully failing bankrupts," are characters we have rarely, we believe we might say, never seen in our Nonconformist circles. Undoubtedly they are occasionally to be found with us; it has rarely been our privilege to know them. Our author's experience seems to have been rich in this way; when in some aristocratic party, one said to Foote the comedian, "your handkerchief is hanging out of your pocket." "Thank you," said the wit, "you know your company better than I do." When we read our author's charmingly truthful description of Nonconformist churches, we could only mentally reply: "The gentleman knows *his own* company better than we do." We cannot think with him, that the like of these make up the staple of Nonconformist churches.

We are at issue again with our author with reference to the ministry. Is it true, "other things being equal, that there is "a premium upon the cleverest rhetoricians, and that these become as pastors of the largest and richest congregations, the "most influential men in the denomination?" It does not occur to us that we have now a single mere rhetorician, pastor of a large or rich congregation; rhetoric altogether is at a low ebb with us—may it long remain so. We have able preachers, but Baptist and Independent congregations can scarcely point to a man in whom the qualities our writer assigns to ministerial success predominate. Certainly men like Thomas Binney, Samuel

Martin, and Alexander Raleigh, and Stowell Brown, and Henry Allon, and Dr. Spence, and some score besides,—pastors of our largest and most influential churches,—do not suggest the idea of rhetoricians; this is an illustration of that bitterness in the book, which grievously flaws its usefulness. The writer is himself a minister; we regret therefore his injustice to the ministry. Ministers, in general, we regard as among the bravest, most hardly-worked, most ill-used, and worst paid of all men in the country. We commend to his notice and to the notice of Nonconformist congregations in general, a paragraph in Dr. Alexander Lindsay's description of his ministerial life, at a Congregational meeting at Aberdeen:—

“I am ready, without any beating about the bush, to say that we are all underpaid for what we do. I was talking lately with a London business man, a successful merchant. It was about the time bishops were getting made, and we talked about their incomes. He said to me, ‘And, if it is a fair question, what do you get?’ I told him. ‘Well,’ he answered, ‘is that all you get?’ ‘Yes; and, compared with what many of my brethren get, it is pretty fair.’ ‘And what do you do for that?’ I said I would enlighten him upon this. ‘In the first place, I compose and write what would be fully two pretty thick octavo volumes—about as much as any literary man, bending over his pen, thinks of doing, and more than some do, in a year. In the next place, I have to do as much speaking every week as a lawyer at the bar in good practice. Then, in the third place, to do as much visiting as a surgeon in average practice would do. And, in the next place, I think, I write as many letters as many of you great merchants do.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘is yours an extraordinary case?’ I said, ‘Not at all. A man's duties correspond with his sphere. But many of my brethren do as much; some of them, perhaps, a little more.’ ‘Well,’ he said again, ‘they may say as much as they please about ministers getting too much for their work, but none of us would do half your work for four times your pay.’”

All this is true, and almost every conscientious minister among us could bear the same testimony. It is usually admitted that a minister is a light and blessing to a town—there are many shopkeepers—there is but one minister. It is shocking to think that with all his tastes, necessities for books, and appeals for charity, his income rarely rises beyond that of some third- or fourth-rate clerk or tradesman. We never in all our experience heard of an instance in which the income of a minister arose from the liberality of a church. When ministers are in receipt of very large incomes, as is sometimes the case, it is perfectly idle to speak of this as liberality, it arises from the success of the minister, and the largeness of the congregation. There is not a more important question for thought in our Congregational tactics than that of the income of the minister. The present

state of ministerial incomes naturally prevents many able men from entering the ministry; while it is not unusual to hear many people talk in the most absurd way about the duty of ministerial sacrifice. A theory sometimes seems to obtain that, as taking up the cross is a mark of the Christian life, and self-sacrifice for God a privilege of the Christian life, the minister—favoured man!—should be left to a quiet monopoly, both of the work and the privilege. We have heard strange things in this department of church life. The other day a good friend of ours, with a wife and young family, yielded to an invitation to take the oversight of a church, offering £350 per annum; the church he was leaving waxed very wroth, even persecuted to the best of its power—it knew the man's value; but in a large town, and itself able to give an income equal to that offered, it had never given more than £200 a-year. Scarcely one of these grumblers but would have moved anywhere, to any position, for an increase of £50 a-year. Our author satirizes, and ridicules, as he is well able to do, such phrases as “a call,” and “a call of Providence.” Now we, for our part, lay it down as a canon that usually a call to a larger salary is a call of Providence; it is the sign either of a larger field of ministration, or a larger share of appreciation. The case differs from the incomes of the Established Church, in which, usually, the largest incomes, such as Doddington and Stanhope in Weardale, represent the smallest proportion of labour. Incumbents of large parishes in towns, feel they are badly treated if they are not promoted to fat country rectories. A conscientious and laborious minister will be about as useful in one sphere as in another—souls are of the same value everywhere, and there are but twelve hours a-day in which any man can work. We remember an amusing case. A friend of ours, the pastor of a Nonconformist Independent Church in the country, rejoicing in an income of £35 per annum, received a call to a large London church; the signification of his intention to remove was received with much indignation; he said to the church, “Well, give me £80 a-year, and I will stay with you.” The church was even wealthy, but it refused to do it—the minister was to do all the self-denial—to exercise all the sacrifice, although the church and congregation had men wealthy and able within its number. Our congregations have learnt to be liberal to all causes, and all interests, except the ministry. This should be altered—this must be altered if Nonconformity is to be an increasing, moral, and spiritual power in the country. To rectify this, What is to be done? We hear too much of very small salaries, and occasional handsome testimonials. A minister receives for years a very small stipend, and by and by is rewarded

by some testimonial silver teapot, or purse ; now we should say, give better incomes, and fewer teapots. It is desirable that the minister should be everywhere, and at all times maintained. What, we again say, is to be done ? The abolition of pews and pew-rents has been suggested, and it seems to be advocated by the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters,' he says :—

Notwithstanding the notable liberality of many individuals, the conception of the Lord's portion of a Christian's income requires reconstruction in the public mind. The iniquity of the pew-rent system, like that of the Amorites, is "come to the full." It has lowered the rate of giving to the cause of God, in the richest nation in the world, down to a level beneath that at which idolaters often tax themselves for their wicked but expensive religions. The high and holy feelings connected with the "offerings of God" in His temple have been exchanged for the sale of "seats," which regulates a man's contribution not by his income, but by the magnitude of his family, this often being in the inverse ratio of his resources. Men have been led to think that they must pay a small sum for a piece of board to sit upon while they listen to the Word of God, and have forgotten that what God commanded was a loving, liberal, ample recompense in temporal support, for human services, whose results shall be eternal. The Christian religion was not designed to relieve the worshippers of God from the expenses at which the Jewish Temple, with its carnal ordinances, was maintained, but rather to cause at least an equal expenditure to be devoted to *spiritual* ends.

We must call our readers' attention to this most important matter upon some other occasion ; for the present, we only remark, that in the present state of our churches it is clearly quite possible, by abolishing the system of pews, to deteriorate the ministry ; making the minister an eleemosynary pensioner upon the alms of his people. The voluntary principle has effected wonders, but it has not raised the ministry in the same proportion in which it has raised chapels and institutions. In fact, very little care or thought is usually given by the people to the minister ; the pew-rent is paid ; to what extent it may be sufficient to maintain a ministry is not inquired ; but with the payment of the pew-rents all claim upon the hearer is usually supposed to end. The stipendiary relation of the minister belongs to and suggests another thought. From some cause, the ministry is not the powerful and influential force it was half-a-century since ; especially during the last twenty-five years it has lost hold and power. Yet this may not be altogether so bad as it seems, it may arise from the greater interest felt by all people in religious concerns ; the people may be sure that the ministry is not altogether to blame. Our writer finds the cause,

no doubt, in the fact that our congregations are "congregations of shopkeepers."

The plan which gives up all government and all appointments in Church and State, to the order and intelligence of small shopkeepers, never did answer and it never will. Any one who will take the pains to become extensively acquainted with the dissenting ministers of the empire, will infallibly conclude that the lower you fix your stipends, the lower will be the social and intellectual type of the occupants of your pulpits. Specially apostolic souls must be judged apart.

A congregation of shopkeepers! Ah! Could we but have a *congregation of Dukes!* what fervour, what devotion we should have! what a lifting of the heart! Or if not, at any rate, a congregation of gentlemen by profession, and scholars and *diligenti*; and our author believes in this precious Gospel of snobbery. Does the author believe this? This is the crime of Non-conformists; their churches are composed of "shopkeepers, and charwomen and shopboys." Oh, the author greatly overrates our success with such classes, but he may know that this is scarcely to be regarded as a disgrace; there is a great deal of the fine gentleman in all this. We know very well the writer's meaning and intention, and it is not without a side of truth to it, but our author has stated it coarsely and unkindly, and indeed erroneously, for, truly, the shopkeeper element among us is not that which keeps our fervour and devotion alive, while it contributes to the resources and means for the support of the congregation. We are, we will confess it, utterly disgusted with this theory of a church for parvenues and fine gentlemen; and from another pen the excellent author would be one of the first to visit the sentiment with a sharp castigation.

While we write these remarks, we glance over a paper in our old friend, the *Saturday Review*,* full of the usual rabid sans culottism of speech, in which it foams and froths along as usual in filth and fury. Some paragraphs, however, of the more decent description might have been penned by the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters.' It is easy to perceive in all this, however, that high-church *Saturday Reviewers* know their system to be doomed; palpitatingly they inquire "whether the certificate of Homerton or Didsbury may shortly be as valid a passport to Anglican orders as the degree of Oxford or Cambridge?" We think it very likely, because it may also be the certificate of a diploma from the London University, where notoriously the educational test is higher both in classics and mathematics, and the probabilities of fast-life blackguardism

* "Wanted a Preacher." September 5th, p. 319.

fewer, and the assurance of religious tendencies at any rate incomparably greater. The following paragraph, however, we commend to the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters.' This is the mode in which we choose our ministers:—

A certain number of candidates are nominated for a vacancy, and the persons so nominated then proceed to fight it out among themselves. So, when Zion loses its shepherd, the wethers of the flock hie forth in search of a successor, and invite as many promising "parties" as, according to proper episcopal usage, they can lay their hands upon. Then there is a fair field and no favour. Sunday after Sunday do the flock sit in judgment upon the various shepherds, until they find one to their taste. The worshipful body of deacons or wethers presents an appearance of corporate wisdom on these occasions which must be truly awful to the nervous candidate. The expression on the countenance of each seems to indicate the practices of his calling. As the young man in the pulpit invites their attention to his samples of doctrine, the pork-butcher seems to be mentally prodding with his fore-finger the flanks of some fat hog, the linendraper to be inwardly performing that peculiar operation with fore-finger and thumb with which he is wont to test the texture of cloth, and the cheesemonger looks as if he had just drawn his gimlet from the heart of an old Cheddar, and, after digging out a piece with his thumb-nail, were solemnly pondering the verdict of his palate. Of course people who—in the words of the young man at the late Wesleyan Conference—"are ground to the earth by a tyrannical Church system which leaves them in darkness," may doubt whether the best way either of producing or selecting honest, thoughtful, learned, and large-minded men is to put them in the position of religious bagmen soliciting orders; but it is impossible to deny that this method is highly favourable to the adventurer. It may often be the means of bringing modest merit into the light of day, but it also gives a wonderful chance to impudent hypocrisy. The adventurer, who, from the very force of the term, is not a blockhead, knows exactly the quality of doctrine which will suit the palate of his examiners, and is generally sufficiently fluent to spice his exposition with the tinsel illustrations and forged anecdotes which the soul of the Bethel wether loveth. Or if he have not originality enough to forge anecdotes, or manufacture illustrations, or declaim fine English, he can always resort to the literary labours of previous ages and other churches, without any fear of detection.

Such is said to be our method; the thing is very drolly put, but divested of its drollery, really the method seems as likely to turn out as well as the sale of advowsons, or advertisements, "Wanted a living," or whispering in the ear of a cabinet minister, or a bishop, or grasping a cure of souls by inheritance, or preaching the sermons of Dissenters, or the thousand ways in which men who want a living, but have no conscience in their work, contrive to win for themselves the contempt of all good men

in this world, and the doom of ungodly and unprincipled priests in the next. The peculiarity of the thing is to find our estimable author side by side in his version of matters with this most estimable Review. On the whole, what a sad thing it is, that these shopkeepers will have souls, and will care about them, and that somehow they have a kind of power in the state too, and think they have a right to choose their own spiritual food. We imagine our excellent author, like some plumed knight of chivalry, going forth in a right hearty crusade against all that Jacquerie. When Henry VIII. spoke to the rebels of the north, in his manifesto he told them they "knew no more of government than a blind man of colours;" and we," said he, "with our whole council, think it right strange that *ye, who be but brutes and inexperienced folk*, do take upon you to point us who be meet or not for our council." This is the doctrine of the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters,' and the Saturday Reviewer:—Religion is not apprehensible by the common-sense of mankind: therefore the multitudes have no voice in the ordering of religion, their duty is simply to bow and believe. Shopkeepers are necessarily "brutes and inexperienced folk!"

However this may be, if the congregation be composed for the most part, as it is most likely to be, of shopkeepers, shopkeepers must manage the affairs of the church, and we have never found that they have been behind when appeals have been made to the liberality of the congregation. An enlarged liberality, is we believe, needed; but it is very necessary that it should take a definite shape and form, and it would be an unhappy day for the ministry, if by the abolition of pew-rents, as they are called, he should find himself thrown upon a precarious and uncertain maintenance. We have argued that the minister has a right to his support, but, we believe if his maintenance were placed upon the uncertain and evanescent impressions of the people and their sense of what they could afford, their minister would very frequently find himself in a distressing condition. Our author, as we have seen, ridicules the "paying a small sum for a piece of board to sit upon" while listening to the Word of God; he might just as well ridicule the paying a sum for permission to live behind certain bits of brick and board in a thing called a house; it is very certain that a great number of our ministers are almost paupers, and the practical result of the abolition of pew-rents, would be to make all, what many are: such questions as these, convince us of the necessity of some great change and revision of our Congregational system; of the necessity for the entire and absolute independence of the churches, we have no doubt, this is Scriptural, but

churches independent in themselves, may be united in sympathy; they should be so united; the stronger should support the weaker too, and in such a manner as to bear up the respectability of the whole denomination. We have, no doubt, carried our independency altogether to unreasonable extremes; we have worn it threadbare, and driven it mad; it must be our aim to seek the stability of the churches: large churches in teeming centres of the population, presided over by attractive and able men, may well glory in the triumph of Nonconformity; but we rather take pride in that which excites our author's abhorrence, and scorn, and indignation. We love these village chapels; we honour and reverence their poor ill-paid or unpaid pastors, labouring steadily on from year to year. The despised conventicle stands beneath the shadow of the old romantic ivied turret; it has been for ages the refuge of piety from heartlessness and folly; oppression has been unable to crush it: its ministers, its church-members are by no means impeccable, but there they meet together with a measure of faith, and reality, and freedom; for such ministers, a sentiment is awakened within us, which the munificently-paid ministers of our larger chapels never awaken; what self-denial goes on there we well know: there, with scarce a sympathy a year, the minister plods his round; on him devolves every kind of labour; he preaches in the farmhouse, he teaches, most likely superintends, the Sabbath-school; he has gathered the scantlings of knowledge, and God and his congregation take good care that he shall not have the scantlings of experience,—a very little money comes to his purse. We ourselves who sometimes preach, preached anniversary sermons some time since on the banks of the Wye, to help a minister who ministered in two humble buildings, separated two or three miles from each other, and his income was, we believe, from £20 to £25 per annum. Such a man ekes out his income with his little plot of garden-ground. Sometimes the objects of our veneration occupy a station a little more comfortable than this; their place has a central character for usefulness; it gives a pulse of piety to the neighbouring villages, is it to be the object of scoff and scorn, that it has its large Sabbath-school, its Sabbath-school treats; that it caters for the amusement of its school circles and congregation? In all this, there is a good deal that excites the wit of our writer. We have little hesitation in expressing our sorrow that any one so real and sincere as we know the author of this pamphlet to be, should have been betrayed into views so partial, so unjust, and so bitter; but, while we say this, we can also have as little hesitation in expressing a desire to see the financial arrangements,

placed upon a wider and more substantial basis, more likely to give to the minister more the position of a Christian gentleman; but the difficulties—the difficulties should be borne in mind. The Church of England is a monopoly—it is the protected sect—it has not a monopoly of learning, of genius, of piety or usefulness; those who have found their faith, their freedom and their devotion in a free, although rude temple, deserve more respect, consideration, and sympathy, than they receive from our author.

Another subject on which our writer speaks, and which it is necessary to devote some attention, is that of Worship; again we regret the injustice of the satirist of “the congregation of shopkeepers.”

In a Mohammedan Mosque you see the outward and visible form of an adoration, which, if not spiritual, is at least solemn and profound. But in these little ‘causes’ you neither saw nor heard anything to persuade you that the ‘worshippers’ feared the Author of Nature, or ever kindled with the remembrance of his glory. ‘The friends’ were a free and easy set, who sang hymns without devotion, to tunes without either dignity or music in the strain, some through their noses, and some through their throats, but most of them at the top of their voices. The prayers were freely flowing dissertations on Calvinistic theology, delivered nearly in the same tone with the sermon; and the sermon was a rude mixture of sensation talk about the crucifixion, and heaven, and hell, beaten up with a quantity of unctuous experimental syllabub. The leading supporters were vulgar and ignorant village farmers, or petty dealers, who demanded spiritual stimulants to keep them easy in their consciences, but whose real requirement was to be put in their proper places by the presence of persons of greater moral refinement than themselves, and by a religious awakening which would humble them for their conceit and irreverence. That such scenes as these are to be found by hundreds in these islands, in our times, is more than we will venture to affirm—or to deny.

“Is it for such exchanges as these that it is worth while to forsake the Church of Hooker and Barrow, of Sanderson and Leighton?”

And again:—

Candour, however, obliges us now to admit, which we do very heartily, that our visits to the best Nonconformist churches leave us still enamoured of manifold excellencies in the national service, and somewhat dissatisfied with the one-sided developments of modern Puritanism. This Puritanism lacks the grand soaring element of the Church of England worship, it lacks its stateliness and poetry, and it lacks the voices of the people. The tone of worship in Nonconformist chapels never rises above a certain level—we might almost say *never* rises to the empyrean. It is quiet, soberly, orderly, devout—but never inspired, never grand, never of a nature to carry the soul on the wings of imagination to the third heavens. There is nothing answering to

the *Adeste Fideles* of the Roman Catholic Church on Christmas Day, or to the *Magnificat* of the Prayer-Book Service. The flight of David's inspired muse is arrested by the string of Dr. Watts' metrical limitation. Everything is turned into measure. The precentor is sometimes a hard radical, and an uninspired singer of uninspired 'tunes,' whose lead is sufficient to quench by its conceited obtrusive personality the spirit of true worship in the whole congregation. The people 'like singing,' but they are not always instructed to remember that the God of the Dissenters is, or ought to be, the Awful Power who hath 'poured out the waters from the hollow of His hand, and stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.' There are no stately forms to assist the rise of stately thought, or to aid the kindling of a fire in the heart of the congregation. The 'minister' is sometimes a little too prominent, and hides, like an opaque window, the Sun of Spirits, ready to shine forth on the assembly of His adorers. Too much, perhaps, depends on a single mind, with its infirmities, or changing moods, or eccentric failures in temper, or fervour, or reverence. Accordingly, you see, if not in the best of these congregations, yet in some of the inferior order, how difficult the Dissenters find it to be as devout as are even the Mohammedans. Our unadorned Nonconformity presents a fearful trial, and ensures a terrible exposure of character to ungodly men; for he who with us has not the spirit of veneration soon comes to dispense even with the form. In such cases how rare is the posture of adoration, how imperfect the silence, how ready the descent to the level of domestic familiarity. 'Nobody is superstitious, that fault belongs only to the people of the Establishment;' and, therefore, at least in country districts, ministers may talk, and 'give out notices' as freely as they please; deacons may ramble about the aisles, singers may loll in pew-corners, and chapel-keepers may even enter into an audible chat with 'the friends' as they enter.

Now anything more flagrantly unrighteous than this picture it seems quite impossible to conceive. The writer goes on to say that "the hymnology of Puritanism has always reflected its theological history and temper; it has never risen to the height and breadth of the Psalms of David." We do not know that even the more ancient anthems have risen so high, but, we believe still that the services we know in our plain conventicles, our "tabernacles of shopkeepers," are as worthy as those which the writer looks to with feelings of such admiring envy in the parish Church, or the city Cathedral. Did the writer ever hear of one Luther, who assuredly must be included among Puritans, and who wrote certain psalms, which have been thought very good. Many Episcopalians must be mentioned with Puritans,—Cowper, and Newton, and Toplady. To the hymnology of Puritanism belongs that of the Moravians and

Methodists ; but we are willing to waive all these claims, and demand for Watts a place by the side of Basil or Ambrose ; he was not less than the hallowed Chrysostom of sacred song. True, many lines and verses, and even hymns, are very unequal, but the loftiest genius sometimes faints in its flight. Even in the little brochure before us, there are occasional indications of feebleness. We are weak enough to regard the hymnology of Puritanism as matchless ; to it belongs those tones so familiar to us in the pages of the '*Lyra Germanica*,' and the hymns from the land of Luther, Ken, and Keble, paradoxical as it may seem to say it, would probably never have existed but for Puritanism. These are voices of the Church, meditative, contemplative, solitary soliloquies of the soul ; but, for the ardent and fervent voice, in which the people praise the Lord—for the rapturous and adoring vision, for the movement of the mystic spiritual sense, which sees, and sings, and soars, rises until it rests, and rests while it rises—tremulous, tearful, passionate, peaceful, inspired and inspiring—it may be safely said, the hymnology of Puritanism and of England equals all, and leaves most hymnologies far behind.

We have no doubt that our services are capable of great improvement in breadth and in intensity ; but the services of Puritanism have been the ovation of holiness, and earnestness, and freedom ; and how great have been the difficulties they have had to overcome. What prejudices ? What narrowness ? And let the writer of this pamphlet enter the greater number of the village churches of our country, and he will find not more the flight of the inspired muse than in the humble meeting-house ; the chant now frequently swells in the service in concord with the hymn ; and, if in some instances there seems much to be taught, certainly our people have not been indisposed to learn.

We drift between two rocks. Independents say Christianity is not an ecclesiasticism, but we have constituted ourselves in many instances an ecclesiasticism while saying it ; on one side we are met by a wild licentious, lawless, and disobedient spirit which rises, seeking to gather congregations together in any place, to disturb and to rob churches—hovering about over the dark sublimities of Scripture, like a marble light—promising to explain, and only plunging into mysticism. We have heard of many ministers thus troublesome, having no church themselves, and being amenable to no authority, giving no help to any church, but only hindering. Ministers of all bodies, Episcopal and Nonconformist, are proverbially the very worst hearers of preachers ; and there are few men in the pulpit who do not dread the advent of a white necktie in a place of worship ; not

on account of greater wisdom or knowledge, but from its almost invariable association with an unkind spirit and bad behaviour; the last person to whom a minister would look for sympathy in an hour of terrible official trial would be a minister. This is the rock of lawlessness from which we are in danger. We are also in danger from a hard, narrow interpretation of Independency, and its constitution; an interpretation which hews and hacks in its ignorance at the human mind, and drives in everything under the plea of absence of form into formula; and under the plea of spirituality into the most cold and heartless, and arrant materialism.

Whether anything would be gained by an attempt to understand the work and the wants of the great nonconformist party of England, may be doubted. One thing tending materially to weakness, is the absence of all *Esprit d'corps* in our midst; in fact there is very little that is especial and distinctive relating to Congregationalists, especially Independents; together most of them care very little for church government, and church government never holds any people together with any great tenacity; the theology taught is of the most routine character; and if we were to take at hazard men from any of the pulpits of the low Church, Methodist, or Independent congregations, they might all be expected to present (of course omitting any marked exceptions) the same monotonous uniformity of union, passive thought, and speech. Efforts to reach the experience by experience, are very rare. That which attaches to most temples the congregation is the minister. We have gained as a denomination in freedom, but we have gone off in graceful ellipses and circles. Hostility to error would be a poor, an ineffective principle in any age to hold together a people or a church, it would be a wretched bond of union; and if it were possible that such a heart of union could be, it would be but a bilious cantankerous, and quarrelsome body, going off constantly in various directions. We want attachments, and loves, and central faiths, to hold us together; it may be doubted whether we have as a body this sense of a general-uniting principle of relationship,—and its absence is—weakness.

It is a noble thing to be a Congregational Independent, it is to be especially free. On the contrary, the peculiarity of its ecclesiastical rule prevents it from impressing itself so instantly, perhaps even so permanently, on the community as some other denominations. It trusts especially to its spiritual power, and this it is to be feared sometimes dissolves into a very thin and unsubstantial shade. All other bodies, the Episcopalian, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, have a sense of the demands of

the body upon them. With us this is felt to a very inconsiderable degree. Yet Independency may feel proud of what it has accomplished; incomparably beyond any other polity, it has imprinted itself upon the mind and opinion of our country. It is to be feared that it has made itself felt rather politically than religiously; it has converted, and is converting every day, and on every side, to its negative truth, the freedom of the soul and of thought, the independence of the citizen from church tyrannies and forms; its voice is heard throughout all the land, from the chambers of the parliament to every little town corporation; but has not converted so extensively the conscience as the mind of the nation; it has a stronger hold upon the intelligence than the heart of the people. And this arises, we believe, not from anything essential in the system itself, but because its activity has been elicited rather in the exposure and the condemnation of the false, than in the conversion and salvation of souls.

In purposes like these, the salvation and the confirmation of souls, the idea of Independency had its origin. Our readers know the well-known lines of Robert Browning, whose taste seems to be more spiritual than that of the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters.'

"I, then, in ignorance and weakness,
Taking God's help, have attained to think
His All in All appears serene.
With the thinnest human veil between,
Letting the mystic lamps, the Seven,
The many notions of His spirit,
Pass, as they list, to earth from Heaven.
For the preacher's merit or demerit.
It were to be wished the flaws were fewer,
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,
Which lies as safe in a golden ewer;
But the main thing is, does it hold good measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters!"

"Heaven soon sets right all other matters!" This should then be the aim of our method "to give good measure." In our efforts to establish religious services, it is possible that we think too much of chapels, and chapel-building, and that in our holy work there is too little attainment of conscience among the worshippers, and too little effort to reach, to search, and to enlighten the conscience by the minister, as in other ages and in other church systems. We are in danger of being oppressed by a church form without any life—the life of worship and the life of service. The theory that instruction, a sort of lecturer's-desk kind of work is to be the mark of the pulpit, has, no doubt,

given a false and most baneful impression to the effect of all our public services, from which we cannot be too soon recalled.

We have called attention to the little book called 'Sketches of Churches and Character,' published some time since, because while its aim is the same as that of the author of the 'Customs of Dissenters,'—to point out, and to rectify, if possible, the abuses of the Congregational system,—it is written with so much more genial a pen; it is really full of genius and sprightliness, overflowing with wit and humour; we have no knowledge of Mr. Jeffreys, but he is certainly a shrewd observer, and a vivid painter. His book ought to be very popular, for it has many of the most essential ingredients of a popular and useful book; the satire is softened and rounded, but it contains many scenes which have all the truth, while they have not the sharp acid flavour of the more recent author.

IV.

D'AUBIGNE'S GENEVA AND CALVIN.*

IT has been some time our intention to introduce these volumes to the notice of our readers; to many, possibly, it is now unnecessary, but we cannot allow the opportunity to pass, for the expression of our sense of their high interest and value; they form but an instalment of the work itself. We are led to expect two volumes more in the course of the present year; and, judging from those we already possess, the work will form a very pleasant addition to the author's well-earned fame. The department occupied by the first volumes, is indicated on their titlepages, and may be referred to as containing the most popular account of the foundation of the liberties of Geneva, and the important relation that illustrious little city held to the conservation of free thought in Europe, with which we are acquainted. To the personal memory of Calvin, we question whether the work will rear so noble a monument as that in his life, by Dr. Henry: but Calvin, in these volumes has not yet appeared in Geneva, and but a small

* *History of the Reformation in Europe, in the time of Calvin.* By J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D.D. Vols. I. II. Geneva and France. Longmans.

portion is occupied with the details of his dawning intellect and development of his intellectual influence. We receive, in these volumes, a remarkably vivid and interesting picture of the growth of the Reformation in France, especially its trials in Paris, and a still more interesting picture of the development of freedom in Geneva, and the magnificent struggles of the little city against the tyrannic exactions of its ecclesiastical and feudal oppressors. In his disposition to honour Calvin, by placing him in the foreground of his history, we think it likely that D'Aubigné will have done some injustice to himself. It is true these volumes record events of the times of Calvin, but events, not affected by Calvin; he has scarcely emerged beyond his student life, and has not risen to the rank of either of heresiarch or hierarch. The glorious people who move through these pages—Margaret of Navarre, William Budæus, Berquin and Berthelier, Lévrier and Bonivard were persons who served their generation, and whose entire individuality was formed before Calvin appeared on the scene. With their words and deeds, their faithfulness to their convictions, their hairbreadth escapes, or their martyrdoms, these volumes are full, and readers who might expect only in volumes devoted to the narrative of Calvin's life and influence, the more dry and arid work of the biographer, will frequently kindle with surprise and pleasure to find himself among scenes and events of the most romantic interest; interests which never flag, either in the portions we have of Calvin's story, the abounding life of the Court of Francis I., in the Louvre, or at Fontainebleau, or the rising tide of opinion surging through the Rues of Paris, or the magnificent story of the way in which industry wrung concessions to its rights, in the isolated and narrow little township at the foot of the Jura. It seems to us now the great turning-period in the world's history; it was not merely the age of the Reformation, it was the period of the Renaissance; that new-birth of the classical forms and thoughts, in which Paganism again breathed in Christendom, and a new architecture, new forms of scholarship, new poetry, and new painting, took possession of the university and the palace. The Renaissance hastened, we have no doubt, the downfall of Rome, but it is a more difficult question to determine to what extent it aided the development of Christian truth; it was in nature that it should expand the human mind, and we find that the studies of the Renaissance do that in our own day. But they do not increase its reverence; on the contrary, they lower the tone of reverence, they contribute to the original stores of nature's harshness, and hardness; and they substitute for tenderness and sensibility a meritricious sensuality and voluptuousness. This was the period when Rome reached its

height of vice, its depth of shame; and when Luther saw what Bonivard, six years later, saw in the Holy City. We may quote the testimony of the Prior of St. Victor to the state of Rome, in the day when the Pagan classics had restored to it all the features of Pagan morals delineated in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

“Bonivard reached Rome without any obstacle six years after Luther, and like the reformer was at once struck by the corruption which prevailed there. ‘The Church,’ he said, ‘is so full of bad humours that it has become dropsical.’ It was in the pontificate of Leo X.; all that priests, monks, bishops, and cardinals thought about was being present at farces and comedies, and of going masked to courtesans’ houses. Bonivard saw all this with his own eyes, and has left us some stories into which he has admitted expressions we must soften, and details we must suppress. ‘Having business one day with the concubinary of the pope’s cubicular (we learn these unusual expressions, the meaning of which is not very edifying), I had to go and find him at a courtesan’s. . . . She wore smart feathers, waving over a fine gold coif, and a silk dress with slashed sleeves; you would have taken her for a princess.’ Another day, while walking in the city, he met one of these ‘misses,’ disguised as a man, and riding on a Spanish jennet; on the crupper behind her was a *janin* wrapped in a Spanish cape, which he drew carefully over his nose so that he might not be recognised. ‘Who is he?’ asked Bonivard. ‘It is Cardinal So-and-so with his favourite,’ was the reply. ‘We say in my country,’ he rejoined ‘that all the madmen are not at Rome; and yet I see you have them in abundance.’

“The prior of St. Victor did not lose sight of the object of his journey, and canvassed unceasingly; but began to despair of success. ‘Do you wish to know,’ he was asked, ‘what you must do to obtain a request from the pope and cardinals? Tell them that you will kill any man whom they have a grudge against; or that you are ready to serve them in their pleasures, to bring them *la donna*, to gamble, play the ruffian, and rake with them—in short, that you are a libertine.’ Bonivard was not strict; yet he was surprised that things had come to such a pass in the capital of Catholicism. His mind, eager to learn, asked what were the causes of this decline. . . . *He ascribed it to the disappearance of Christian individualism from the Church, so that a personal conversion, a new creature, was required no longer.*’ ‘That in the first place,’ he said, ‘when princes became Christians, their whole people was baptized with them. Discipline has been since then like a spider’s web, which catches the small flies, but cannot hold the large ones. And next it comes from the example of the popes. . . I have lived to see three pontiffs. First, Alexander VI., a *sharp fellow*, a ne’er-do-well, an Italianised Spaniard,—and what was worst of all—at Rome! a man without conscience, without God, who cared for nothing, provided he accomplished his desires. Next came Julius II., proud, choleric, studying his bottle more than his breviary; mad about

his popedom, and having no thought but how he could subdue not only the earth, but heaven and hell. Last appeared Leo X., the present pope, learned in Greek and Latin, but especially a good musician, a great glutton, a deep drinker; possessing beautiful pages whom the Italians style *ragazzi*; always surrounded by musicians, buffoons, play-actors, and other jesters; accordingly when he was informed of any new business, he would say: *Di grazia, lasciatemi godere queste papate in pace; Domine mio me la ha date. Andate da Monsignor di Medici. . .* Everything is for sale at the court: red hats, mitres, judgeships, croziers, abbeys, provostries, canonries. . . . Above all do not trust to Leo the Tenth's word; for he maintains that since he dispenses others from their oaths, he can surely dispense himself.'

Bonivard, astonished at the horrible state into which popes and cardinals, priests and monks, had sunk the church, asked whence could salvation come."

Thus, by their vices, the clergy were digging a gulf beneath their feet, into which they would drag everything,—doctrine, worship, church. "God only remained," said Bonivard, "but while Geneva slept, He kept watch for her."

The story which M. D'Aubigné recites is one which, for the welfare of the world's best interests, cannot be recited too often. It is the story of the method Right took to make itself mighty; it is a story to make the ears tingle, the heart to beat, and the spirit of man proud. From two opposite centres the lessons were emanating by which Europe was to be taught, and Protestantism conserved. The work of Calvin at Geneva suggests many points of exception; but it must suggest to every free mind marvellous admiration. We called attention some months since to the memory of Calvin, and then pointed out what seemed to us the human defects of his mind and system,—upon these now we are little disposed to dwell. We are much rather disposed to admire that iron energetic will, upon which the puny wills of proud princes were shivered like eggshells. It is very instructive and exemplary, as instructive to draw the comparison between the condition of the empire founded by Charles V., and the empire founded by Calvin. Where is Charles V. and his power, and the principalities he bound together in his empire? On the contrary, where is that empire of thought inaugurated and reared by the frail hand of Calvin? It gave life and vigour to all the struggles of the Netherlands. To Calvin in Geneva we owe very greatly our own mighty struggles in the civil wars—the statesmanship of Pym—the soldiership of Cromwell, and the majesty of Milton, and something of the eminence of our own English constitution, while the great republics of the West were born of the brain of Calvin. "If the empire of Charles V. was the largest theatre

"in modern history, Geneva was the smallest;" but in the empire of mind and freedom, how much larger than the empire of Germany, and the kingdoms of Spain and Arragon and Castile was the dominion of Geneva. D'Aubigné, in the volumes before us describes the heroic age of this their obscure city, from the year 1513 to the year 1532. It is impossible to read without emotion the narrative of the brave and noble deeds by which the city opposed itself to the robber nobles, whose chateaux, the fastnesses of licentiousness and cruelty, were strewn along the valley of the Lemman. To crush the liberties of the people the nobles turned highwaymen. The tottering episcopal throne of Geneva was upheld by these banditti. Energetic, rude freebooting men, who, growing weary of their isolation and their idleness, would collect their followers, lower their draw-bridges, rush into the high roads in search of adventures, and indulge in a life of raids and plunder, violence and murder. It is interesting to observe with what a calm spirit the Genevese proceeded to do battle with their oppressors. There is much in the story of Geneva, and its contests with its bishop; its feudal chief, the Duke of Savoy, reminding us of our own contests with the Stuarts. The city, while frequently ringing with the vehement popular excitement, never permitted itself to yield to popular fury; it knew its duties as well as its rights, and was prepared to assert and to maintain them. No doubt, like England, it was happily situated, insulated by an ocean of hills, with the guardianship of the waters, of the Lemman and the Rhone; then at the period we have indicated, its heroic age, it had calm, firm, great men, worthy captains for the struggle. The concession of its independence was wrung mainly by their bravery and their blood, before Calvin entered the city. A city like Geneva was the abhorrence of Rome, one of those communal franchises which the clergy call the worst of institutions. Such states almost sink that epithet, and become rather embodiments of society which is above the State. There was a living force in Geneva in 1513. A vital, although apparently so puny a power; to that force we owe it that Geneva became the battle-ground of despotism and liberty; of montanism and the Gospel; it so happened that what was scarcely more than a little village at the foot of the Alps, became first the Thermopylæ of European freedom, and the means of wringing from the Papacy the half of its empire. Readers who desire to see the steps by which this event was brought about, must refer to the pages of D'Aubigné. In most great periods of revolution and change, God seems to raise up some especial fool, to become the scape-goat and embodiment of all the crimes and vices of previous

ages. The fool of Geneva was the bastard of Savoy, raised in virtue of his servility, and meanness, and debauchery, to be its bishop. D'Aubigné describes him as "a little man frail, livid, "hideous, reduced almost to a shadow, without genius and "without will, but with nevertheless the will and the genius of "evil." He had promised great things to the Duke Charles, if raised to that honour; as the brave Bonivard said, "he has sold "us, not in the ear but in the blade, for he has made a present "of us before we belonged to him." He was sworn to protect the constitutional liberties of Geneva, and his first expression after taking the oath in his circle of courtiers was, "Well, gentlemen, we must Savoyardise Geneva!" Geneva would not be Savoyardised. He did his best by attempting to debauch the citizens, and buying over the patriots. He insisted on Berthelier's accepting the governorship of Penay, and he believed the worst was done. "It is a hard "bone in their mouths," said he, "which will prevent their barking." Such being the prince bishop, the character of the priests may be inferred; the monasteries in the town were nests of abomination; nobody in Geneva had so bad a reputation as the monks; there was nothing of which they were not thought capable. Some one said, "what an obstinate devil would fear to do, a monk would do without hesitation." Our readers know that age, when the Pope, Innocent VIII., having sixteen illegitimate children, when raised to the tiara, was called the "*father* of the Roman people,"—charity forbids us to be very angry with the inferior clergy for their slight escapades in that direction. The magistrates of Geneva, however, were disposed to make some efforts for the rectification of these abuses; and they were aided by men who have earned for themselves an immortal name by the help they conferred. Among these, worthy of a very grateful remembrance, was Francis Bonivard; his genius was not of the order likely to attract the most fervent imagination of D'Aubigné; the work he did in Geneva was akin to that Erasmus did for the Reformation in Europe; he was of that order of men who sting a lie to death with satire, but he seems to have had a capacity which it may be doubted whether Erasmus ever possessed, a capacity, if not for heroism, certainly for martyrdom; he comes before us, a cheerful, careless, scholarly young man; at Turin, the ring-leader of a somewhat wild set of humorists, imported into Geneva by the Duke of Savoy, to aid in the corruption of the city. He must have sadly disappointed the Duke, for he chose the path of manliness and freedom; then he became the prior of St. Victor. St. Victor was a small state, with a small terri-

tory, and its prior was a sovereign prince; all which brings out the character of Bonivard in a proportionate relief-light of nobility. He does not seem to have been burthened by a superabundant weight of religion; on the contrary, nothing is alleged against his character during the years of the Genevese struggles for freedom. He espoused the cause of the city, and served it well; and when we stood on the Island, in the midst of the waters of the Lemman and the Rhone, and looked upon the monument of "the self-torturing sophist" and sentimentalist Rousseau, we could not but think the city would have honoured itself more by placing at the foot of the lake a monument to the memory of the intrepid and brave, if somewhat sarcastic, prior, who was able to renounce everything for the freedom of the City, and who for six long years was chained to the pillar beneath the waters at the head of the lake, by his foe the Duke of Savoy, whom treason to Geneva would have made so fast and powerful a friend. The taste of modern Geneva, however, seems peculiar; the heads of Lévrier, and Berthelier, rolled on the scaffold for her; Bonivard was imprisoned for her; Calvin lived for her, lifted her and crowned her, but there seems to be no monuments to their memories; it assuredly seems incongruous, the city of Calvin, raising to her pedestal, such a high-priest of dancing-masters as Rousseau.

The blow which brought the citizens of Geneva and their weak vicious bishop face to face, was the illegal seizure by the bishop, of Claude Vandel, a high-minded lawyer, of spotless integrity, respectful manners, and great courage, who had undertaken the defence of a citizen against some of the bishop's emissaries. The city was roused, the bishop had not counted the cost, the relatives of the bishop hastened to Berthelier; "No-body," said they, "dares bell the cat." That was a great night; at eight o'clock in the evening, all the council met. Three hundred of the most eminent of the citizens joined the assembly, and crowds of the people thronged the hall. Berthelier was present. Berthelier was one of those to whom the bishop had given "a bone," as he said, to prevent his barking; he was one of the first to speak: "To maintain the liberties of the city," said he, "we must act, without fear; let us rescue the citizen whom traitors have seized." John Tacon, captain-general, and one of the bishop's pensioners stopped him: "Gently," said he, "if we do as you advise, certain inconveniences may follow." Berthelier exclaimed, "Now the pensioners are showing themselves!" At these words, Tacon could not contain himself. "It was you," he said. "Yes, you who showed me the way to take a pension." Berthelier pulled

his commission from his pocket, tore it in pieces before the meeting, saying, "Since I showed you the way to take them look; 'look! I show you the way to resign them!'" The words were electrical. A cry of "No more pensions," was raised on all sides. All the pensioners declared themselves ready to resign their pensions, and tear up their letters patent, like Berthelier. The commotion was very great; Vandel was restored to liberty; the bishop's hatred against these men grew deadly and intense; the tolling of the bell in the tower of St. Pierre that night; the ringing of the hammers on the belfry door, fastened by the priests, to prevent the entrance of the ringers; these are events which rouse our interest and our blood. Geveva was up. From that night she never retrograded. We have always regarded that night as Geneva's decisive hour; it was the beginning of that epoch in her history, which made her famous amongst the nations of the earth. The bell of St. Pierre rung out for her own liberties, and tolled the knell of some priestcrafts and falsehoods in Europe. Now came the time for Berthelier to attempt to create a public opinion. The Bishop of Geneva, and the Duke of Savoy, had done their best to debauch and deprave the youth of the city; the patriot also sought to inspire in them nobler affections; and ambitious Bonivard also sought to save the city, he was indeed alarmed at the severe doctrines of the Reformation; he was rather like Erasmus, a man of the Renaissance, than of the Reformation. He scattered brilliant wit and inextinguishable thoughts—biting expressions, in which, however, he struck out to the eye the living form of the truth. Beneath the leadership of these men, Geneva advanced to its place, foremost among the powers of the age. It is very instructive attentively to watch the process by which the little city became independent and strong, but it was not without the shedding of much noble blood. We shall look with interest for the succeeding volumes of D'Aubigné's work, in which we shall have the development of the city beneath the rule of Calvin; at this moment the history is especially interesting to us. We cannot acquit the man of God of despotism; he struggled, it is true, with libertinism, but he struggled against more, he struggled against some of the noblest instincts of the human soul; he promised death to the Independents who should venture to express their tenets in Geneva. In most matters of government he was scarcely before his age. By his claim to punish heresy with death, he lagged far behind Luther. How different the German Reformer's words—"Thou askest me," he writes to Link, "if the civil magistrate is permitted to slay the 'false prophets.' I have little love for condemnations to death,

“even when fully merited. Besides, in this matter, one thing alarms me; it is the example we give. Look at the Papists; and before the time of Christ; look at the Jews. The law commanded that false prophets should be slain, and they ended by slaying almost none but blameless prophets. In nowise, therefore, can I approve that false doctors should be put to death.” But we anticipate days yet to come, days to which our present author has not conducted us as yet. In the present volumes are recited to us the stories of the dark days, when the liberties were a winning; and the most affecting pictures in the volumes, are those of the deaths of patriotic men. The story especially brings before us the old reflection, that the nation, small or large, is what it is by the unquailing strength in the hearts of two or three men; there was a soul in the little nation, and in the soul dwelt lofty aspirations. It is not to the Swiss in general, the Genevans owe their independence, but to the resolute will of those heroic spirits to whom it was given to strike fire, by their life or by their death, into the multitudes. We may honour even the soil which gives birth to such men; but freedom is the gift of God, and new Divine doctrine reveals a new principle of authority. In the ‘History of Geneva,’ the man who, in these pages, commands most of our passions and our reverence, is Berthelier. He was the Hampden of Geneva, a calm, fearless, conscientious man; to oppressors and tyrants a dangerous man. He was the active and much dreaded citizen, whom the duke and the bishop must, at all hazards destroy. Beneath the martyrdoms, in which the heads and quartered bodies of patriots were suspended on the tree; and beneath, the exactions of despotism, he knew how to be calm as well as intrepid. He knew that his life was not worth a moment’s purchase; he had been able, even in the moment of exile, to procure the alliance of Switzerland with Geneva; and he was able to wait quietly for death, “booted and ready,” says our writer, “to depart for the unknown shores of eternity.”—Only forty years of age, at the moment of his arrest, when walking in a quiet meadow, his favourite retreat, he had his “terrible whistle,” which would have instantly surrounded him with enthusiastic defenders; he knew it could not be worth the lives it would cost, that his, in any case, was doomed. He soon found a bloody prison; but on his way, and in his prison, he exhibited all his wonted calm. D’Aubigné says, perhaps it was rather from *the Tusculans* of Cicero, than the Gospel, he derived that calm with which his soul was filled. Why should he say so, when his guards, touched with his good nature and patience, and courage, said to him, rough men as they were, “Ask my lord’s pardon,”—

"What lord's," said he, "My lord Duke of Savoy, your prince and ours." "He is not my prince," he said, "and if he were, I would ask no pardon, because I have done no wrong. It is the wicked should beg for pardon, and not the good." "He will put you to death then," said the guards. Berthelier made no reply. But a few moments after, he went up to the wall, and wrote: "*Non moriar, sed vivam et narrabo opera Domini.*"—"I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord;" and this, while it shows a certain knowledge of Scripture, shows also that he had cast his burdens on the Lord; and the sentiment, in fact, is one suggesting a confidence and a calm, not born of the *Tusculans* of Cicero. His death was soon determined on, without the formality of a trial, indeed, he had been tried but a short time before, and acquitted. The bishop did not, however, dare to put him to death upon the usual place of execution, the Champel, a little distance from the city. He would hardly have taken a hundred steps, when the Huguenots, rising like one man, and issuing from every quarter, would rescue him from the executioners, who were nothing but murderers before the laws of men and the justice of God. We shall quote the historian's account of the martyrdom of Berthelier.

"In every quarter of Geneva men's eyes were fixed on the Chateau de l'Île. Its old gates fell back, the guards marched out first, the provost came next, followed by the headsman holding Berthelier. The martyr's countenance proclaimed the greatness of his soul.

"There was and still is, between the castle and the river a narrow space, so protected by the Rhone and the fortress that fifty men could hold it against all the inhabitants of Geneva. The prince-bishop, so learned in the art of tyranny, was not ignorant that if the victim to be sacrificed is loved by the people, the death-blow must be given in prison, in a court-yard, on a narrow beach, or in a castle moat. Berthelier having advanced a few steps found himself between the chateau and the river. 'Say thy prayers,' said the provost. The hero knew he was about to be murdered: he made a 'short prayer,' and, rising from his knees, was preparing 'to utter a few words before dying,' to give a last testimony to the liberties of Geneva; but the provost would not permit him.

"The bishop intended, however, that Berthelier should be conveyed to the place of execution for criminals; he only found it more prudent to have him taken thither dead than alive, being sure that in this way the 'youths of Geneva' could not restore him to liberty. The lifeless body of the martyr was placed on a waggon; the executioner got in and stood beside it, holding the victim's head in his hand. A universal horror fell upon the people, and many, heartbroken at being unable to save their friend, shut themselves up in their houses to veil their hatred and their shame. The long procession, starting from the castle,

moved forward, preceded and closed by foreign soldiers; in the middle was the waggon bearing the dead body, and close behind followed many mamelukes. 'not the least of their party, in great insolence, mocking at their own calamity; but good men dared not breathe, seeing that when force reigns, the good cause must keep still.' The procession continued its march as far as Champel, where the executioner suspended the body of the father of Genevese liberty to the gibbet. Thence, by a singular refinement of cruelty, they proceeded to the bridge of Arve, and the head of the dead man, who has so often terrified the bishop, was fastened up in the place where those of Blanchet and Navis had hung so long. The prelate seemed to take pleasure in reviving the recollection of his former butcheries.

Thus that kind-hearted man whom everybody loved, that heroic citizen around whom were concentrated all the hopes of the friends of liberty, had been sacrificed by his bishop. That death so hurried, so illegal, so tragical, filled the Genevans with horror. The fate of his widow and children moved them; but that of Geneva moved them more profoundly still. Berthelier had fallen a victim to his passion for his country; and that passion, which made many other hearts beat high, drew tears even from the most selfish. The body hanging from the gibbet, the head nailed up near the bridge of Arve, the memory of that sad procession, did not speak to the senses only; men's hearts were rent as if by a violent blow, and many refused all consolation. There were also some proud firm spirits who, unable to weep, gave vent to maledictions. They might be met silent and frowning in the streets, and their air, the tone of their voice, their gait, their ironical and bitter words, expressed an indescribable contempt for the murderers. They retraced in their minds that strange struggle, between cruel princes and a generous, simple-minded, poor but free man. On one side were the splendours of the throne, the majesty of the priesthood, armies, executioners, tortures, scaffolds, and all the terrors of power; on the other, a humble man, opposing his enemies by the nobleness of his character and the unshrinking firmness of his courage. . . . The combat was unequal, and the head of the great citizen had fallen. A bishop looked with an ecstacy of joy on the blood of one of his flock, in which he bathed his feet while impudently violating all the laws of the country. But—and it was the consolation of these proud citizens—the blood that had been shed would awaken a terrible voice. Outraged justice and bleeding liberty would utter a long and mournful cry, which would reach the ears of the Swiss League. Then would mountain and valley, castle and cottage, city and hamlet, and every echo of the Alps repeat it one to another, and thousands of arms would one day unite to defend that little city so unworthily oppressed.

Religious liberty had many victims three centuries ago in all the countries of the Reformation; but the noblest martyrs of political liberty, in modern times, have fallen at Geneva (if my judgment does not mislead me), and their death has not been useless to the universal cause of civilisation. *Cruciate, torquete, dammate. . . sanguis christianorum, semen.* The blood of the martyrs is a seed which takes root and.

bears fruit, not only in the spot where it has been sown, but in many other parts of the world.

Quid mihi mors nocuit? Virtus post fata virescit;
Nec cruce nec gladio sævi perit illa tyranni.

As we see, the idea of a resurrection, of a life after death, over which man has no power, seems to have been uppermost in the mind of Berthelier as well as of his friends. This man was not a common martyr of liberty.

'Verily,' said some, 'the maxim lately set forth is a true one: Heroes and the founders of republics and empires have, next to God the greatest right to the adoration of men.'

The extract is lengthy, but it is a favourable illustration of the charm and interest of the style of our historian, and of the vital interest too, of the topics he introduces. Lévrier was another of the patriots who had not only to die, but to suffer the torture before death. If Berthelier was the Hampden of Geneva, Lévrier was its Pym; it was necessary that he should die in prison, and by night by torchlight, he fronted death with the same calm we saw on the face of Berthelier, strong in the hope which is full of immortality for himself and his country; "Death will do me no evil," he said. He was murdered in the castle of Bonne, about an hour and a-half's drive from Geneva.

Alone in the night, in those sublime regions of the Alps, surrounded by the barbarous figures of the Savoyard mercenaries, standing in that feudal court-yard, which the torches illumined with a sinister glare, the heroic champion of the law raised his eyes to heaven and said: "By God's grace I die without anxiety, for the liberty of my country and the authority of St. Peter." The grace of God, liberty, authority—these main principles of the greatness of nations were his last confession. The words had hardly been uttered when the executioner swung round his sword, and the head of the citizen rolled in the castle yard. Immediately, as if struck with fear, the murderers respectfully gathered up his remains and placed them in a coffin. "And his body was laid in earth in the parish church of Bonne, with the head separate." At that moment the moon set, and black darkness hid the stains of blood which Lévrier had left on the pavement of the court-yard.

While liberty was working out the regeneration of Geneva, through this dreadful baptism of blood and fire, she was performing her work for the world with the same, and with other instruments in France. Our readers know that this was the period so dear to those partial historians, who love the lace-work of history, its glittering tinsel, and its soft refrains. One disposed to write the life of Francis I., using rose-water for ink, might tell, as Miss Pardoe has told, a very different story to that reflected in the pages of M. D'Aubigné. The revelries

of the Louvre, and the gaieties and the great hunts of Fontainebleau, and the meretricious splendours and court intrigues, in which women crested and glittering, wind to and fro; and stories of the rich patron of letters, and his love of painters, and poets, and sculptors, and in fact all the finery of the *drapeau d'or* furnishes a succession of scenes, much more pleasing to a certain order of imaginations, than the stories of imprisoned martyrs; the struggles of heroic men to find a footing for truth and freedom, somewhere out of the universal weltering of chaotic and spangled embroilments of courts. Francis I. does not shine in these pages; this Chesterfield amongst princes has never been a favourite ours. We have not been able to perceive about this fine-gentleman king anything very interesting to our admiration or reverence. He had a sense of imagination, and occasionally a gleam of justice, a possibility of goodness; but here and elsewhere, he is more interesting to us as the brother of Margaret of Navarre, than as the king of France.

M. D'Aubigné brings before us in his usual vivid and eloquent manner, many of the actors of those times and the leaders in the formation of opinions and events we are too much in danger of forgetting. Foremost among the number is the sister of Francis I., Marguerite of Alençon, afterwards Queen of Navarre. We must regard this beautiful woman with affection; she has often been spoken of as cold and half-hearted; but our author seems to have a very distinct and sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties of her position. We must pardon her if brought up in the very heart and atmosphere of Rome, with no motives to push her to the expression of extreme opinions, she supposed it possible to effect a reformation, without breaking altogether away from Rome; there were many who clung to the fond idea. We must think of her as a woman naturally affectionate to whatever had touched, or held her heart,—as a queen surrounded by all the difficulties incident to her high station; she was also by temperament and character better fitted to bear and suffer the will of God than to proclaim it, or nicely to discriminate its distinctions and its demands; but she was not a half-hearted woman,—she espoused the cause the Reformers, and did not shrink from avowing her sympathy, and extending her hand to help. She exposed herself to cruel persecution, from the consequences of which it needed all the firmness of her brother, the king, to save her; she appears before us as a pious and devout woman, and she understood the Gospel. Probably, her poem entitled 'The Mirror of a Sinful Soul,' in which she discovers her faults and sins, as also the grace and blessing of Jesus Christ,

her spouse," raised against her the hostility of the priests. It contained for the peace of the soul,—Peace by faith alone, and through Christ, without the aid or intervention of sacramental or priestly efficacy. One of the superior of the order of greyfriars, when passages from her 'Mirror' were read, exclaimed: "Let us have less ceremony, put the Queen of Navarre in a sack, and throw her into a river." One of the few truly admirable traits of character in Francis I. is his love to his sister Margaret, but there is but small credit due to him for loving such a woman; the sister who after the mournful result of Pavia travelled to his sick-bed when he was a prisoner, and most likely prevented the gates of the grave from opening to receive him, broken in heart, and sick in body. To her, sometimes a word or two in his letters seem almost to indicate that the voluptuous prince had such commodities about him as conscience and tenderness. So that the persecutors of Margaret really made great mistakes, and the monk who suggested her being enclosed in a sack, and thrown into the river, took a very fair course for meeting that destiny himself instead. The Queen's book was recalled from its expurgation, and her foes, themselves, became exiles. In this, however, we are to see much more of the king's personal affection to his sister than his disposition to the Reformation. She stood frequently between the king and men who would have been the victims of their opinions. Evangelical martyrs knew that she shed tears over them, when she could not save them. We have already said that this beautiful woman has received less than justice from most of the historians of the Reformation; not only could she not believe that the cause of Rome was so hopelessly bad as it was, but with many of the most beautiful, although not the strongest spirits of the time, she sought a settlement of church questions in some compact which might have restored the distracted element to unity and peace. It is easy, also, now to perceive that she served the men of God and her age, perhaps, better in the position she occupied than she would have done in one less neutral. It may be presumed, too, that she cared comparatively little for scientific theology, and excepting as it was forced upon her, not much for the question of church government. She loved the Saviour, and evidently partook of Him, and of His merits, without the interposition of the mass. The priests found in her no friend, and her volume of tales, in which she satirizes with a very free hand, the vices of the clergy, is very well known to all readers; it is not free itself from the taint of the licentious court in which she lived; and it is her own high and pure character which gives the assurance that it was written womanly,

to rebuke vices so universal among the clergy of her day. But the queenly satirist, could scarcely be surprised if she found that her own somewhat warm affections towards the priesthood, were returned with interest; she found fault with their lives, and there was no gainsaying that. They found fault with her creed, and that was a much more dangerous affair. She sought relief for her own heart, (and by the way, what a story of a desolate deserted affectionate heart it is!) in verses which still hold a place in the literature of France; she, however, used them as a vehicle for affections which found no object on earth, and burned with all a woman's fulness and tenderness to Him, who then, as now, was known as the one "touched with the feeling of the infirmities of sad hearts." By her verses also, she very likely more effectually served the principles of the Reformation, than even did the sermons of some of its greatest doctors. We are glad that D'Aubigné has introduced into his story some of these poems, elegant little verselets, comparatively unknown now, but well-known among the young lords and maids of honour of the Fontainebleau of that day; as *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite*. Here is one of these pearls, a conversation in the old woods of Fontainebleau.

As a youth was riding one day to the wood,
He asked of a lady so wise and good
If the game he sought for could be found
In the forest that spread so thickly round;
For the young man's heart with desire beat high
To kill the deer. The dame, with a sigh,
Replied: 'It's the season for hunters, 't is true,
But alas! no hunter true are you.

'In the wood where none but believers go
Is the game you seek, but do not know;
It is in that bitter wood of the cross
Which by the wicked is counted dross;
But to huntsmen good its taste is sweet,
And the pain it costs is the best of meat.

If that your mind were firmly set
Every honour but this to forget,
No other game would be sought by you. . .
But . . . you are not a hunter true.'

As he heard these words, the hunter blushed,
And with anger his countenance flushed:
'You speak at random, dame,' he cried;
'The stag will I have, and nought beside.'

MARGARET.

'The stag you seek is close in view,
But . . . you are not a hunter true.

' Sit you down by the fountain's brim,
 And in patience wait for him ;
 There, with soul and body at rest,
 Drink of that spring so pure and blest :
 All other means but this are nought.
 For eager in the toils of your heart to be caught,
 The stag will come running to you ;
 But . . . you are not a hunter true.'

THE YOUNG HUNTER.

' Dame, 't is an idle tale you tell ;
 Wealth and glory, I know full well,
 Are not to be won without toil and care.
 Of your water so pure not a drop will I share.

MARGARET.

' Then the stag will never be caught by you,
 For . . . you are not a hunter true.'

The young hunter understands at last what is wanted of him, and, after some further conversation with the lady, he exclaims :

' With earnest faith my heart is filled ;
 All my worldly thoughts I yield
 At the voice of my Saviour Christ Jesu !'

MARGARET.

' Yes, now you are a hunter true !'

We suppose that these volumes furnish the best and most accessible account of this lovely and lofty woman, who now sought to solace herself in her own very many and very heavy sorrows, and then turned aside to chant hymns for martyrs ; and while the skies were reddening their stakes, murmured to herself, " Shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night " unto Him ? " She knew, conversed with, and encouraged Calvin, but there could have been little in connexion between them ; only on two points can we conceive them to have been one. But those two points were all in all with both, they were both converted, Margaret not less than Calvin, was firm and faithful to the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's righteousness and blood. Our readers know that she had two husbands, both fools ; her life was what may be truly called sadly lonely, then she lost her little child, to which she was a perfect mother ; and so she speaks of herself as " a parched and weary land, having " neither dew nor moisture," but she says, " a continual " sprinkling of the Holy Spirit kept up in her heavenly eternity." The following verses very sufficiently express the foundation and the fulness of her faith.

“Come to my fountain pure and free,
Drink of its stream abundantly.”
Hasten, sinners, to the call
Of your God, who speaks to all:

“Come and drink—it gives relief
To every form of mortal grief;
Come and drink the draught divine,
Out of this new fount of mine.
Wash away each mortal stain
In the blood of Jesu slain.
No return I seek from thee
But works of love and charity.”

Hasten, sinners, to the brink
Of this stream so pure, and drink!
Fill your hearts, so that ye may
Serve God better every day.
Then, well washed of every stain
That of earth might yet remain,
By Jesu's love at last set free,
Live in heaven eternally.

“Come to my fountain pure and free,
Drink of its stream abundantly!”
Listen, sinners, to the call
Of your God, who speaks to all.

Thus the Reformation advanced in France, says the author, by two roads; one on the mountains, the other on the plain, the Gospel was making its way among the sons of labour and toil. It had its martyrs among these nor less had it its followers, and martyrs, confessors and witnesses, among the learned and high-born, whose faculty of inquiry had been aroused, and who desired to substitute truth for monastic superstition. Margaret was the evangelist of the court and of the King, she would have made Calvin a Bishop, but the favoritisms of a Court were little acceptable to his simple nature. I am not filled, said he, to do you any great service, the capacity is wanting also, you have enough without me.

There is another Queen who appears in these volumes. In these days it was that Catherine de Medici was given to France. Clement VII. was charmed with the prospect of the matrimonial union, between his family of Florentine Merchants, and that of St. Louis. This marriage he said was for the glory of God and the church, “it is for holy opportunities Clement met Francis at “Marseilles.” “Well,” says D'Aubigne, “the fleet in appearance so inoffensive, which glided so smoothly over the waters “of the Mediterranean, carried like the bark of Ulysses' stores “of future tempests. The events of that marriage well deserve

"a recitation in these volumes, for it was full of ill-omen to the cause Protestantism and free-thought. It was promised for her that she should bring to France three Italian cities, she brought in fact neither Genoa, Piza, Milan, Parma, or Piacenza, but in their stead she gave it the imbecile Francis II., the sanguinary Charles IX., the abominable Henry III., the infamous Duke of Anjou, and also that woman at once so witty and dissolute, who became the wife of Henry IV., and in comparrison with whom Messalina appears chaste. Four children of the Medici are among the monsters recorded in history, and they have been the disgrace and misery of France." Clement and Francis deceived each other most devoutly, but the man who was never mistaken, nor can be, served the papacy by those intrigues in which the Vatican consecrated connubial woes by papal ambition. A bull against heretics was the very first and most appropriate gift he made to France upon the marriage of his niece. On the side of France the disappointment was considerable enough, for "Francis was inexhaustible in his demands, and Clement was inexhaustible in his promises, he promised everything rights, possessions, in a word, whatever he had made up his mind not to give." Perhaps our author in the following passages sinks the historian too much in the declaimer; but his readers especially, if they be Protestant, will forgive him, and think that the shame of France, and the infinite mischief wrought to humanity by that execrable creature, furnish a sufficient cause even for passion in a historian.

The young lady departed for Nice, and people said, pointing to her as they saw her going on board ship: "There is the real cause of the strange journey of a pope to France! If it were a matter touching the safety of the Church, Clement would not do so much; but it is to place a Medici beside a throne, and perhaps set her upon it.... The French fleet put to sea: the ship, on whose mainmast the standard of France had been hoisted, exhibited a sight at once gay and sad. Beneath the flags and banners, at the side of the Duke of Albany, and in the midst of a brilliant retinue, might be seen a kind of little fairy, who was then making her first appearance in the world. She was a young creature, of middle stature, with sparkling eyes and bell-like voice, who appeared to possess some supernatural power, and singularly fascinated every one that came near her. Her enchantments and her philtres were the subtile poison on which the papacy relied for destroying heresy. This child, between thirteen and fourteen years of age, skipped with joy about the stately ship. "I am going to be daughter-in-law to the glorious King of France" she said to herself. Death, with whom this strange creature seemed to have made a secret and terrible treaty, was in truth ere long to raise her to the summit of power. The galleys of

Albany, after having conveyed *the girl* to Nice (it is Guicciardini's word), returned to Leghorn, the port of Pisa, and on the 4th of October the pope, with the cardinals and all his household, put to sea.

* * * * *

As soon as the pope's niece arrived, preparations were made for the marriage. The ministers of the king and of the pope took the contract in hand, and the latter having spoken of annuity of one hundred thousand crowns: "It is very little for so noble an alliance," said the treasurers of Francis I.—"True," replied Strozzi, one of Clement's most able servants; "but observe that her grace the Duchess of Urbino brings moreover three rings of inestimable value. . . . Genoa, Milan, and Naples." These diamonds, whose brilliancy was to dazzle the king and France, never shone on Catherine's fingers or on the crown of Henry II.

The ceremony was conducted with great magnificence. The bride advanced, young, brilliant, radiant with joy, with smiling lips and sparkling eyes, her head adorned with gold, pearls, and flowers; and in her train. . . . Death. . . . Death, who was always her faithful follower, who served her even when she would have averted his dart; who, by striking the Dauphin, was to make her the wife of the heir to the crown; by striking her father-in-law, to make her queen; and by striking down successively her husband and all her sons, to render her supreme controller of the destinies of France. In gratitude, therefore, towards the mysterious and sinister ally, the Florentine woman was forty years later, and in a night of August, to give him a magnificent entertainment in the streets of Paris, to fill a lake with blood that he might bathe therein, and organise the most terrible festival that had even been held in honour of Death. Catherine approached the altar, trembling a little, though not agitated. The pope officiated, desirous of personally completing the grandeur of his house, and tapers without number were lighted. The King and Queen of France, with a crowd of courtiers dressed in the richest costumes that surrounded the altar. Catherine de Medici placed her cold hand in the faithless hand of Henry of Valois, which was to deprive the Reform of all liberty, and France herself, in the *Unhappy Peace*, of her glory and her conquests. Clement gave his pontifical blessing to this tragic pair. The marriage was concluded: the *girl*, Guicciardini calls her, was a wife; her eyes glanced as with fire. Was it a beam of happiness and pride? Probably. We might ask also if it was the joy of the hyena scenting from afar the graves where it could feast upon the bodies of the dead; or of the tiger espying from its lair in the African desert the groups of travellers upon whom it might spring and quench its raging thirst for blood. But although the appetites which manifested themselves in the St. Bartholomew massacre already existed in the germ in this young wife, there is no evidence (it must be acknowledged) that she allowed herself to be governed at Marseilles by these cruel promptings.

There are creatures accursed of God, who, under a dazzling veil and fair outward show, impart to a nation an active power of contagion, the venom of corruption, an invisible principle of death which, circulated

through the veins, infects with its morbid properties all parts of the body, and strikes the physical powers with general prostration. It was thus at the commencement of the history of the human race that a fallen being deceived man; by him sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*. The first scene which stands alone, has been repeated, however, from time to time in the world, though on a smaller scale. It happened to France when the daughter of the Medici crept into the family of its kings. No doubt the disease was already among the people, but Catherine's arrival was one of those events which bring the corruption to a head. This woman, so false and dissolute, so vile as to crawl at the feet of her husband's mistress and pick up secrets for her; this woman, who gave birth to none but enervated, idiotic, distempered, and vicious children, not only corrupted her own sons, but infected an entire brilliant society that might have been noble and just (as Coligny showed), and instilled her deadly venom into its veins. The niece of the pope poisoned France.

These broken and fragmentary sketches from these volumes will assure our readers of their interest and value. Into the more painful stories of the persecution which everywhere broke forth upon the marriage with Catherine de Medicis, we have no space to enter. The ultramontane party designed the catching of all the Lutherans in Paris in one cast of the net; the hounds of the inquisition were everywhere at work, in cellars and garrets, and in palaces too. The husband was torn from the wife, and the father from the children, and the son from the mother; the alquazils of the Sorbonne lodged *three hundred prisoners* in the conciergerie. Yet even at this moment, it seemed possible that France might pursue the course of England, and Francis I. become a Henry VIII. Among the most glorious of the victims was Alexander de la Croix—our historian gives with all his peculiar vigour of narrative the history of this remarkable man—he had been a friar, but he abandoned Paris, his convent, his cowl, and his monkish title. He reached Geneva under the name of Alexander; welcomed and instructed by Farel his transformation became complete; Christ had become to him the Sun of righteousness, and bold in confessing Him, the Genevan magistracy, under the influence of the priests, condemned him to death as a heretic; but the sentence was commuted for fear of the king of France, and he was simply turned out of the city. On the high road, beyond the gates, he stopped and preached to the people who followed him. He inspired respect as deeply as he commanded homage by his eloquence. Nobody could stop him, so strongly did his zeal for truth inspire him to win people to the Lord. He did not deceive himself, he knew what awaited him, persecution, bonds, imprisonment, death;—no matter, he would preach to his countrymen; setting out, therefore, from

Berne, he crossed the frontier of Switzerland, and entered France. Few reformers strike us as being so absorbed by what may be called the passion of the cross. "Oh, my Saviour," he exclaimed, "Thou hast given Thy life for me, I desire to give mine for Thee." Wandering along the banks of the Bienne, the Aier, the Seille, and the Saone, he entered the cottages of poor peasants, scattering the seeds of the Gospel, and proclaiming the forgiveness of the Gospel. At Lyons, numbers heard him preach; he went from house to house; persecution raged fiercely in Lyons; the priests sought for him but could not find him; friends hid him away; they sought for him in one part of the city, he was preaching in an upper chamber in another; they looked for him in some suburb in the north, he was preaching in the south. Impelled by a magnanimity which would be fanaticism, if it were not holy devotion and consecration, the mysterious evangelist entered the prison to console two who had been laid there; had he been discovered, the gates would have finally closed upon him, but he left the dungeon, and no man laid hands on him. It was said he possessed Satanic powers, and passed invisibly through the police. At last, he was seized; he had moved long about a mysterious presence, gifted with those mighty powers, eloquence and holiness. After a wondrously effective unfolding of the Gospel at Lyons, principally through the imprudence of some followers it would seem, he was taken; he was brought into Paris loaded with chains, but the surrounding guards and archers in the course of the journey had learned to treat him with respect. The captain of the archers was a worthy man, and as he rode beside Alexander, he questioned him as to the cause of his arrest. It is an amazing circumstance, the captain was converted while they were journeying to Paris. As they journeyed on from village to village in that age of slow journeys, resting for the night in inns, he used all his skill of speech; in many places the priest of the village was sent for to dispute with him, it was unavailing. "Wonderful things!" says the old chronicler, "he was more useful at the inns and on the road, than ever he had been before." Entering Paris, he must have known what awaited him, worse than death; the monks of his order, the cruel Dominicans, outraged by his heresy from the most orthodox of orders, were only too anxious that the last resources of the torture should be tried upon him. As he refused to name accomplices, and would give the names of none who like himself had separated from the church of Rome, he was tortured by the wedges of the boot; his left leg was crushed. The judge was amazed at his patience; "It is enough," he said, "he has been tortured too much." The executioners

lifted up the martyr and carried him to his dungeon, a cripple; they brought him forth again shortly after, condemning him to be burned alive. It seemed as though a flash of joy lit up his features, "Truly," said the spectators, "he is more joyful than he was before!" The priests gathered round him to perform the sacerdotal degradation, "If you utter a word," said they, "you will have your tongue cut out." He uttered not a word, only as the absurdities and mysteries went on, some severe smiles escaped him; then they dressed him in the *robe de fol*, a coarse garment, worn by the poorer peasantry. "Oh God!" he exclaimed, "is there any greater honour, than to receive the livery which Thy son received in the house of Herod?" and then he mounted a cart, used to carry mud or dust, and with the Dominican monks proceeded to the place of execution. As the cart moved slowly along, he threw out his words upon the crowd by the side of the cart. "Thinking nothing of his own death," says a writer, "he scattered the seeds of the Gospel." "Either recant or hold your tongue," said the priest. Alexander turned round and said with firmness, "I will not renounce Jesus Christ; depart from me ye deceivers of the people." He obtained permission at the place of execution, to address some words to the people, but the words amounted to fervid and glowing confessions of love to the Redeemer, and when he had done, he said to the executioner, "Proceed," and the officers of justice bound him to the stake, and set it on fire, and amidst the crackling of the wood, and the ascending flames, arose his voice, "Oh my Redeemer! Oh my Redeemer!" At last his voice was silent. Even the executioners turned to each other and said, "What a strange criminal this is;" and the monks turned to each other and said, "If that man be not saved, who will be?" and the spectators beat upon their breasts, and said, "A great wrong has been done to that man." Such a death as this is indeed a triumph, and it tolls the knell of the executioners, while it prepares the crown for the victim. These volumes are full of these stories of the martyrs. Here is the story of the death of Master Caturce:—

The judges were greatly embarrassed. One of them visited the *heretic* in his dungeon, to see if he could not be shaken. "Master Caturce," said he, "we offer to set you at full liberty, on condition that you will first retract only three points, in a lecture which you will give in the schools." The chronicler does not tell us what these three points were. The licentiate's friends entreated him to consent, and for a moment he hesitated, only to regain his firmness immediately after. "It is a snare of the Evil one," he replied. Notwithstanding this, his friends laid a form of recantation before him, and when he had rejected it, they brought him another still more skilfully drawn up. But, "the Lord

strengthened him so that he thrust all these papers away from him."

His friends withdrew in dismay. He was declared a heretic, condemned to be burnt alive, and taken to the square of St. Etienne.

Here an immense crowd had assembled, especially of students of the university who were anxious to witness the degradation of so esteemed a professor. The "mystery" lasted three hours of triumph for the Word of God. Never had Caturce spoken with greater freedom. In answer to everything that was said, he brought some passage of Scripture "very pertinent to reprove the stupidity of his judges before the scholars." His academical robes were taken off, the costume of a merry-andrew was put on him, and then another scene began.

A Dominican monk, wearing a white robe and scapulary, with a black cloak and pointed cap, made his way through the crowd, and ascended a little wooden pulpit which had been set up in the middle of the square. This by no means learned individual assumed an important air, for he had been commissioned to deliver what was called "the sermon of catholic faith." In a voice that was heard all over the square, he read his text: *The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.* The monks were delighted with a text which appeared so suitable; but Caturce, who almost knew his Testament by heart, perceiving that, according to their custom of distorting Scripture, he had only taken a fragment (*lopin*) of the passage, cried out in a loud voice: "Read on." The Dominican, who felt alarmed, stopped short, upon which Caturce himself completed the passage: *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe.* The monks were confounded; the students and other friends of the licentiate smiled. "We know them," continued the energetic professor, "these deceivers of the people, who instead of the doctrine of faith feed them with trash. In God's service there is no question of fish or of flesh, of black or of grey, of Wednesday or Friday.... It is nothing but foolish superstition which requires celibacy and abstaining from meats. Such are not the commandments of God." The Dominican in his pulpit listened with astonishment; the prisoner was preaching in the midst of the officers of justice, and the students heard him "with great favour." The poor Dominican, ashamed of his folly, left his sermon unpreached.

After this the martyr was led back to the court, where sentence of death was pronounced upon him. Caturce surveyed his judges with indignation, and, as he left the tribunal, exclaimed in Latin: "Thou seat of iniquity! Thou court of injustice!" He was now led to the scaffold, and at the stake continued exhorting the people to know Jesus Christ. "It is impossible to calculate the great fruit wrought by his death," says the chronicle, "especially among the students then at the university of Toulouse," that is to say, in the year 1532.

All priests, however, even when they espoused the nobler convictions did not abide faithful; of these our writer gives us the interesting history of a famous orator Lecoq:—

There was at that time in Paris a curé, named Lecoq, whose preaching drew great crowds to St. Eustache. Certain ladies of the court, who affected piety, never missed one of his sermons. "What eloquence!" said they, speaking of Lecoq, one day when there was a reception at St. Germain; "What a striking voice! what a flow of words! what boldness of thought! what fervent piety!"—"Your fine orator," said the king, who was listening to them, "is no doubt a Lutheran in disguise!" "Not at all, Sire," said one of the ladies; "he often declaims against Luther, and says that we must not separate from the Church." Margaret asked her brother to judge for himself. "I will go," said Francis. The curé was informed that on the following Sunday the king and all his court would come to hear his sermon. The priest was charmed at the information. He was a man of talent, and had received evangelical impressions; only they were not deep, and the breath of favour might easily turn him from the right way. As this breath was just now blowing in the direction of the Gospel, he entered with all his heart into the conspiracy of the ladies, and began to prepare a discourse adapted, as he thought, to introduce the new light into the king's mind.

When Sunday came, all the carriages of the court drew up before the church of St. Eustache, which the king entered, followed by Du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, and his attendant lords and ladies. The crowd was immense. The preacher went up into the pulpit, and everybody prepared to listen. At first the king observed nothing remarkable; but gradually the sermon grew warmer, and words full of life were heard. "The end of all visible things," said Lecoq, "is to lead us to invisible things. The bread which refreshes our body tells us that Jesus Christ is the light of our soul. Seated at the right hand of God, Jesus lives by his Holy Spirit in the hearts of his disciples. *Que sursum sunt querite*, says St. Paul, *ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens*. Yes, seek those things which are above! Do not confine yourself during mass to what is upon the altar; rise yourselves by faith to heaven there to find the Son of God. After he has consecrated the elements, does not the priest cry out to the people: *Sursum corda!* lift up your hearts! These words signify: Here is the bread and here is the wine, but Jesus is in heaven. For this reason, Sire," continued Lecoq, boldly turning to the king, "if you wish to have Jesus Christ, do not look for him in the visible elements; soar to heaven on the wings of faith. *It is believing in Jesus Christ that we eat his flesh*, says St. Augustin. If it were true that Christ must be touched with the hands and devoured by the teeth, we should not say *sursum*, upwards! but *deorsum*, downwards! Sire, it is to heaven that I invite you. Hear the voice of the Lord: *sursum corda*, Sire, *sursum corda!*" And the sonorous voice of the priest filled the whole church with these words, which he repeated with a tone of the sincerest conviction. All the congregation was moved, and even Francis admired the eloquence of the preacher. "What do you think of it?" he asked Du Bellay as they were leaving the church.—"He may be right," answered the Bishop of Paris, who was not opposed to a moderate reform, and who

was married. —“ I have a great mind to see this priest again,” said the king. —“ Nothing can be easier,” replied Du Bellay.

Precautions, however, were taken that this interview should be concealed from everybody. The curé disguised himself and was introduced secretly into the king's private cabinet. “ Leave us to ourselves,” said Francis to the bishop. —“ Monsieur le curé,” continued he, “ have the goodness to explain what you said about the sacrament of the altar.” Lecoq showed that a spiritual union with Christ could alone be of use to the soul. “ Indeed!” said Francis; “ you raise strange scruples in my mind.” This encouraged the priest, who charmed with his success, brought forward other articles of faith. His zeal spoil everything; it was too much for the king, who began to think that the priest might be a heretic after all, and ordered him to be examined by a Romish doctor. “ He is an arch-heretic,” said the inquisitor, after the examination. “ With your Majesty's permission I will keep him locked up.” The king, who did not mean to go so far, ordered Lecoq “ to be set at liberty, and to be admitted to prove his assertions by the testimony of Holy Scripture.”

But we must close our notice of these volumes; full of every fascinating interest to the mind, in love either with the truth of freedom, or the freedom of truth. Volumes possessing an additional fascination to us, read amidst the scenes they describe, and to which they refer.

V.

ARE WE PROTESTANTS? *

IN looking through the volumes of the ‘ Eclectic,’ we have often been struck by the relevancy of many old contributions to

1. *The Congregational Magazine*. May, 1839. Article: *Rev. Dr. Halley on the Permanent Institution of the Pastoral Office*.
2. *The Prevalence of Assumed Apostolicism, a Call to Evangelizing Labours: a Sermon, Preached in the Rev. J. Mark's Chapel, Chelmsford, April 30th, 1839, at the Forty-first General Meeting of the Essex Congregational Union*. By the Rev. James Morison.

* As this sheet is passing under our eye there comes, as by accident, before us, the following clause, from a trust deed of a chapel now in the course of erection. It illustrates some of the points raised in the article. The points referred to, and this clause illustrative of them are peculiarly suggestive at the present time, when much is being said and written on the desirableness of Independent and Baptist bodies becoming one: —“ Trustees of new Congregational chapel at ——— before trust, to permit and suffer the chapel, school-rooms, and other buildings, now or hereafter to be erected on the said ground, to be *for ever* occupied and used respectively for the public worship of God, and other religious and philanthropic purposes, according to the principles and usages of Protestant Dissenters of the Congregational denomination called Independents, *being Pædo-baptists*.”

the prominent points of some modern controversies. The subject of subscription has become of late one of most extensive and absorbing interest. It is one which while agitating the Established Church, necessarily provokes attention to anything which looks like it in other communities. That the Congregational Nonconformists are awake to this, and desire to look into the bearings of the subject, as it may be supposed rightly or wrongly to affect themselves, is evinced by the whole question of deeds, being set down as one of the matters to be freely and openly discussed at the approaching meeting of the Union at Liverpool. It has appeared to us, therefore, that both stimulus and help might be given to thinkers and speakers on the occasion, and in prospect of it by our reprinting the following article, which appeared in this journal thirty years ago; it was understood and believed at the time, to be written by one who just then was the best abused man in all England for his supposed extreme views; but whose habit (unfortunate as some would deem it) of trying to look at both sides of a thing, has, we think unfitted him for being the party leader, which he was expected to prove;—of course we mean, *the Rev. Thomas Binney*.

We place these two pieces at the head of this article, not because we intend to write about *them*, but because they both glance at a subject on which we wish not only to offer a few thoughts of our own, but to elicit, if possible, the thoughts of others. Both the pieces are published in consequence of the request of the assembled ministers who heard them delivered: Dr. Halley's was preached at the ordination of the Rev. T. Aveling, as co-pastor to the Rev. J. Campbell, of Kingsland, near London; Mr. Morison's, as stated in the title, at the meeting of the ministers of an adjoining county; if, therefore, neither of the respected authors should themselves favour us with their thoughts, as so many of their brethren are publicly committed to what they have written, some of them, perhaps, may feel induced to do so.

This opening may sound alarming; we are not, however, about to attack anyone, preparing for battle, or meditating the getting up of a profitless controversy. The subject we intend to notice, is one of great importance; it has many difficulties in speculation; and, practically, whatever view be taken of it, seems to involve something like danger. It is intimately connected with some of the prominent controversies of the day; and, we frankly confess, rather perplexes us, when we want to harmonize the sentiments and the conduct—the professions and the practice,—of some of the combatants. As we thus acknow-

ledge that we do not see our own way very clearly, it would ill become us to pretend to discuss the subject, and it would be monstrous to indulge in assertion or dogmatism. We propose, therefore, to put our own broken and confused thoughts into the form of doubts, or questions, or in any other way that may seem best to consist with a state of mind groping after light, and with the purpose of eliciting light from others.

Mr. Morison's object, in his sermon, is, in his own words, to show, "the suitableness of the evangelizing labours . . . of the "Essex Congregational Union, to the present state of our country; and especially their suitableness, on account of certain "opinions which are extensively propagated." Among these, denominated afterwards "false opinions," the first place is allotted to:—"The DENIAL that the Bible is the only rule of faith and worship."

From the author's remarks on this subject we select a few sentences.

We know that it had been said, "the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." We know that it had been said, "Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved of common authority, ought to be openly rebuked." We could subscribe neither the one nor the other of these declarations;—the first, because we altogether disbelieved it, and the second, not to mention other reasons, because if the practices in view were not repugnant to the word of God, why go to tradition to sanction them? Why not rest satisfied with the verdict of the Scriptures? Why set up a human authority on the same seat of judgment as the Divine?

* * * * *

A learned able, and pious layman who is in high repute in the Episcopal Church, referring to the principle of appealing to the Scriptures alone, says, "It is because the Church of England so substantially rejects this principle, that I am in the habit of maintaining that she is not a *Protestant*, but a reformed portion of the Catholic Church!"

* * * * *

The Holy Scriptures recognise a very dissimilar arbiter of differences, and a very dissimilar rule of interpretation from that of which you have just heard. They say, "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. "Search the Scriptures," was the command of Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

Think, brethren, of your poor and ignorant countrymen. . . . think of one, lulled into false security by the fatal dream, that it is enough for him to believe as others believe; or think of another, who is resting his faith, not on the word of God, but on the word of man, and

will you not give fresh vigour to an institution, *all whose preachers say, and say, without inconsistency and without reserve, "the Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants?"* . . . *to you*, as the representatives of the men who in times still darker, maintained the *sufficiency of the Scriptures*, and *the right of private judgment*, your great Master looks for a zealous maintenance of these essential characters of his religion.

* * * * *

We do not expect by a careful study of the Bible to find new doctrines; but *we do* expect to find new aspects of the old doctrines; we *do* expect to clear those doctrines *from the rust and the rubbish which the ignorance of former ages has heaped upon them*. We *do* expect to see them in all the brightness and beauty of the original, the brightness and beauty in which they appeared when they came first from the hand of the Redeemer.

* * * * *

To sink a man below the dignity of an accountable agent, is the inevitable effect of the pretended apostolic scheme. *It puts down the spirit of inquiry; it teaches to defer to authority; it insists that the religion of the church must be the religion of the priesthood, and that the religion of the priesthood must be the religion of everybody besides.*

By these, and many similar statements, Mr. Morison, and, through him, the Essex ministers, maintain what have always been considered as great Protestant, and by emphasis, therefore, great Dissenting, or Nonconformist, principles; such as the exclusive authority of Scripture; the right of private judgment; the rejection of traditions, and of traditional interpretation or belief; the consequent independence of the church of one age, in respect to its faith, worship, rites, &c., of that of another;—the duty, in fact, of perfecting the Reformation, by appealing from fathers, and councils, and creeds, to the "law and to the testimony," and "searching the Scriptures," with freedom and independence, unshackled by human formularies, in order to clear the "doctrines" "from the rust and the rubbish which the ignorance of former ages has heaped upon them," and thus to get "to see them in all the brightness and beauty of their original."

Dr. Halley improves upon this; and, in a very felicitous and forcible passage, asserts that Independent churches, as such, possess the *power* of fully exercising what Mr. Morison claims as their *right*. Mr. Morison, indeed, involves their possession of this power, and their exercise of it too, when he describes the Essex Congregational Union as "an institution, all of whose preachers say, and *without inconsistency and without reserve* "—the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants;"—addresses his brethren as the "representatives" of men who

maintained and acted on this principle in former days of degradation and darkness ;—and describes the “ great Master ” as looking to them, as such, with particular interest, for peculiar displays of consistency and zeal. We return, however, to Dr. Halley.

After stating, in his introductory remarks, the necessity under which Independents act in dissenting from the Church, the Doctor refers to certain modern reformers, who say that *they* act from necessity in dissenting from *them*. “ An attack,” he remarks “ has recently been made upon [us], and sustained in a series of “ small publications, which are industriously circulated by persons “ who contend for principles *utterly subversive of our discipline “ and order. They profess to maintain more simple modes of “ church government.*” It would thus seem, that, by this new sect, the Independent Dissenters are placed in the position in which they have been obliged, by their conscientious views of the demands of Scripture, to place the adherents and advocates of Episcopacy. Unlike, however, the Episcopal community, which, by its spiritual character, recognizes other kinds of “ authority ” besides the Scripture, and in its political, is bound and fettered by acts of Parliament, so that, it neither would if it could, nor could if it would, obey “ the Bible, and the Bible only : ”—unlike this, the Independent churches, according to Dr. Halley, *have nothing to hinder them from adopting all that their new opponents urge from Scripture, if they saw that Scripture required it.* This “ glorious liberty ”—a liberty at once eminently Protestant, and worthy the boast, the devotedness, and the guardianship of the “ representatives ” of Puritan and Nonconformist confessors—is both eloquently described, and boldly claimed for his brethren and himself, by Dr. Halley, in the following passage :—

Congregational churches can *have no interest in any abuse whatsoever. We are bound by no obligation to the errors of our fathers or our own.* Let any practice among us, however general, or however ancient, be proved unscriptural, and *what should prevent any of our churches from immediately renouncing it ?* Our institutions are not, like Persian laws, immutable. *The power of every church to regulate its own discipline, offices and worship, is a reforming principle diffused through the whole denomination, which, confined by no restrictions, need wait for no enactments, but independent of all considerations, except truth, by its own energy, it may readily correct whatever is proved to be unchristian,—a principle at once so firm as to resist unrighteous authority, and yet so compliant and elastic as to yield easily to reason and accommodate itself to truth.* With us, *every church, inasmuch as it acknowledges no controlling power of Pope or Parliament, convocation or conference, priest or presbyter, can act upon the convictions of*

its members ; and that church would be unworthy the name of Congregational, which, through fear of singularity or innovation, or through any other motive whatsoever, would refuse to supply its deficiencies, to correct its errors, or to renounce any unscriptural practice, however ancient, or popular, or prevalent. The forms of all our churches may be changed, and yet their principles may remain unimpaired. I do not admit that our practices are unscriptural, but I do say, that, if they were, *we could have no interest in maintaining them an hour longer than our convictions might authorize—only let us not be condemned, because we do not hastily admit the crude fancies of every ardent innovator. Let us be sure we have detected the wrong and learned the right, and then the substitute can be easily detected.* There may be too obstinate an adherence to ancient custom ; and there may be too keen a love of novelty ; but neither antiquity nor novelty, in itself, is any evidence of truth. *Carry the appeal to Scripture, and whether the matter in dispute be of long or of late introduction, by its decision WE WILL ABIDE.*

This passage, it must be acknowledged, is both bold and beautiful. It is impossible not to admire the picture which it presents of the unshackled freedom enjoyed and maintained by the churches it describes. They have liberty to follow the Lord's will, whatever it may appear to them to be. Nothing can interfere with their inquiries. Nothing can impede their pursuit of truth ; nothing need deter them from announcing their convictions. Each society, "acknowledging no controlling power "in Pope or Parliament," has nothing to do but to say with respect to everything belonging to religion—everything connected with faith and practice, creed and ceremony—"carry the "appeal to Scripture—by its decision we will abide." In contrast with this enviable condition—this attitude and language of free men,—we will now give Dr. Wardlaw's description of the degradation and vassalage of a Parliamentary church. In the last chapter of the Dr.'s late admirable volume, in showing the evils of establishments, he largely insists on their "*destruction of the church's independence*"—"as to creed—nomination of ministers," &c. A few sentences from his animadversions on on the *first* of these, will singularly illustrate the positions of Dr. Halley, while they again will equally illustrate *them*.

——, when, according to the authority with which all advocates of establishments consider the civil rulers as invested, *the creed has been fixed*, the church that accepts the endowments becomes bound, by every principle of integrity, to maintain it, in all its articles, inviolate. The moment the judicatories of that church presume to introduce an alteration on their own authority, without seeking and obtaining the concurrent sanction of the civil power, they have violated their part of the formal or implied bargain, and have forfeited, by such infraction,

all their right to the emoluments. The distinction between the Church *as a church*, and the Church *as an established church*, is so manifest, that it is surprising it should not by every mind of common sense be instantly perceived, and by every mind of common candour be instantly admitted. Dr. Chalmers may boast, on behalf of his own Church, an “unfettered theology;” but in *no endowed church can there, by possibility, be any such thing*. The endowment fetters it. That chain of golden links *passes round every article of it, and fastens the whole down*. *As a church*, the Scottish church, or the English, *may alter its creed,—may cancel it entirely, and adopt a new one*. THIS IS THE UNDOUBTED PREROGATIVE OF EITHER, *considered simply as a church*. But this is precisely what each has relinquished in accepting a state-endowment. As churches established by law, they must have their articles, and their confessions, their liturgies, and their books of discipline, and their directories for the worship of God, prescribed to them by royal or by parliamentary authority: and a change, unsanctioned by that authority, must involve a forfeiture of the endowment. * * * The fact is, that the articles of the Church of England originally settled and published by legal authority, require the same authority, the authority of her supreme earthly head, to legalize any alteration; and that the same is the case with all her forms of worship:—that the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, along with its other authorized standards, is binding on that Church, *as an established church, NOT by the authority of God, but solely by sundry acts of Parliament; and that by act of Parliament alone can any change be introduced*. IS THIS UNFETTERED THEOLOGY? *Is this the exclusive deference to Christ's authority which He, as the Church's ONLY HEAD, demands, and is so supremely entitled to?* AWAY WITH THE UNWORTHY COMPROMISE OF THE CHURCH'S DIGNITY, AND THE HONOUR OF THE CHURCH'S LORD!” —Wardlaw's Lectures, pp. 348—350.

Having now both pictures before us—both what is claimed and what is repudiated—we shall proceed to give expression to what we have already denominated “our own broken and confused thoughts.” We have promised to do so, not by any attempt at very regular or elaborate discussion, but by “doubts or questions, or in any other way that may seem best to consist with a state of mind groping after light, and with the purpose of eliciting light from others.” In consistency with this, we shall throw out, just as they occur to us, unmindful of order or connexion, *answers* to some of the queries in the above extracts, *inquiries* and appeals as to some of their positions—*doubts* as to the propriety and consistency, in some respects, both of the boasting and the censure in which the writers indulge.

Dr. Halley says, “*Let any practice among us, however general, or however ancient* [infant baptism, for instance, on the one hand, “and party, immersionist communion on the other], *be proved un-*

“*scriptural*, and WHAT SHOULD PREVENT ANY OF OUR CHURCHES “FROM IMMEDIATELY RENOUNCING IT ?” To this question we reply instantly, and without hesitation—The State would prevent you—the State with which you have put yourselves into voluntary union ; the law ; the Lord Chancellor ; in other words, the legal document, called a trust-deed, which has “fixed your creed,” defined your practices, and determined and regulated what you are to believe and to be, for all time. To this reply, however, it would probably be objected, that it is unfair, inasmuch as whatever a trust-deed may connect with a certain building, the church assembling in it does so only in the exercise of its own liberty—freely and voluntarily holding the views required by the deed for legal occupancy : and that it is perfectly competent for it, in the language of Dr. Wardlaw, “to alter its creed,” cancel it entirely, “and adopt a new one ;”—that it has, and can exercise, as he further expresses it, “this undoubted prerogative” of a church ;—for nothing can compel it to remain in the building : it can depart when it pleases, and, erecting another, or meeting for worship in “an upper room,” can carry out, in its faith and practices, its own convictions of the Master’s will.

All this is undoubtedly true ; but is this, we ask, *all* that is meant by Dr. H.’s eloquent sentences ?—Does he merely mean to say, that all the Dissenting churches in the land, have perfect liberty to make any changes they please in their doctrine and discipline, according as Scripture may seem to require them, *at the expense of all the property of which they are possessed ?* Suppose a sect to have 5000 places of worship, which are worth on an average £1000 each ; this would give property to the amount of five millions ;—suppose this property to be attached, by law, to certain definite opinions and practices, some of which, for the sake of argument, we will suppose to be unscriptural and wrong ; would it be quite fair—would it be true—would the known principles of human nature permit the churches of this body to say : “We can have *no interest* in any abuse whatsoever ! We are “bound by *no obligation* to the errors of our fathers, or to our “own !” We do not admit our practices to be unscriptural, but “we do say, that if they were, *we could have no interest* in maintaining them an hour longer than our convictions might authorize.” “With us, every church can act upon the convictions of “its members ; and that church would be unworthy, which, “though fear of singularity, or innovation, *or any other motive* “*whatsoever*, would refuse—to renounce any unscriptural practice, however ancient, or popular, or prevalent.” “The power “of every church to regulate its own discipline, offices, &c., is a “reforming principle, diffused through the whole denomination,

"which, confined by no restriction, need wait for no enactments, "but, *independent of all considerations except truth*, by its own "energy, it may readily correct whatever is proved to be erroneous." Could all this be said in the circumstances supposed? Would it be *true*, that a body had no "*interest*" in an error, when by holding it they retained property to the value of five millions? Would it be *true*, that they could carry out a "re-forming principle," "*independently of all considerations except truth*," when they would have to "consider," that *if* they advanced to a certain point, they must give up five millions? Would it be *true*, that they were "bound by no obligation" to anything,—were "confined by no restrictions,"—"need wait for "no enactments"—had nothing to do with "parliaments,"—when legal instruments, which nothing but the power of parliament could dispense with, bound them to the maintenance of a certain creed, and a certain discipline, at the peril of their parting with five millions?

Property, in the form of substantial and valuable buildings—in chapels, schools, vestries, &c., constitutes an endowment, as really as land or money yielding an annual income. A congregation possessing a freehold edifice worth £5,000, is *endowed* to the amount of rent which such a building would bring, since they would have to pay that for the accommodation which they now enjoy for nothing. If, however, they only hired or rented a place, they could change their creed or their customs—alter their views upon any point—follow the Scripture wherever it led—consulting nothing, and caring for nothing but their own personal conscientious "convictions;" but, as endowed, or entrusted with property, the uses of which are distinctly specified in a legal "instrument," they must consult *that*, if they wish to retain possession. In this latter case, they may boast, if they like, of their "unfettered theology,"—their spiritual *independence*—their liberty to "alter their creed" according to their conscience—their right to appeal to "the Bible, and the Bible only"—their freedom, as a church, from all secular, and legal, and parliamentary interference, and their consequent power to yield "exclusive deference to Christ's authority, their only Head." To all this, however, we submit, that Dr. Wardlaw's words, in the previous extract, may be fairly adapted by way of reply:—"When the creed has been fixed [by a trust-deed], the church "that accepts the endowments [the building] is bound to maintain it, in all its articles, inviolate. The moment that "church presumes to introduce an alteration on its own authority "without seeking and obtaining the concurrent sanction of the "civil power [which alone can set aside a legal instrument], it

“has violated its part of the formal or implied bargain; it has
 “forfeited by such infraction, all its right to the emolument
 “[the trust property]. The distinction between the Church,
 “*as a church*, and the Church *as an endowed church*, is manifest.
 “Dr. Wardlaw, may boast, on behalf of his own church, an
 “‘unfettered theology:’ but in *no endowed church can there, by*
 “*possibility, be any such thing*. The endowment [the building
 “held on condition of holding along with it a certain creed]—
 “this fetters it. This chain of golden links passes round every
 “article of it, and fastens the whole down. As a church, it may
 “alter its creed,—may cancel it entirely, and adopt a new one.
 “*This is its undoubted prerogative considered simply as a church*.
 “But this is precisely what it has relinquished in accepting its
 “endowment. *As possessing this*, its articles, discipline, direc-
 “tions for the worship of God, are prescribed to it by a trust-
 “deed which rests on parliamentary authority:—and a change,
 “unsanctioned by that authority, must involve a forfeiture of
 “the endowment. The fact is, that when the faith and disci-
 “pline of a church are originally settled by the legal authority
 “of a trust-deed, although they may be afterwards sincerely and
 “voluntarily adopted by a church, *as a church*, yet they are
 “binding on it, *as an endowed church*, not by the authority of the
 “word of God, but solely by an instrument deriving its power
 “from acts of Parliament, and by sanction of Parliament alone
 “can any change be introduced. *Is this unfettered theology?* Is
 “this the exclusive deference to Christ’s authority, which He, as
 “the church’s head, demands, and is so supremely entitled to?
 “*Away with the unworthy compromise of the Church’s dignity, and*
 “*the honour of the Church’s Lord*.

It is not our purpose to make out, that wherever there are en-
 dowments, in the form of chapels, secured to a certain church by
 law, there is the principle of a *national*, religious establishment.
 Dr. Wardlaw has noticed this opinion in his first lecture, and it
 is not our wish to repeat it here, or to say that he has not satis-
 factorily met it. We allow the difference between the govern-
 ment of a country appropriating public and national property to a
 certain church on conditions of its preaching a certain creed; and
 a church, if we may so express it, endowing itself, out of its own
 property, and securing that endowment to the maintenance for
 ever of its faith and discipline. Without for a moment pre-
 tending, therefore, that the latter is an establishment, we desire
 to look at it just as what it is—as if there were no national
 establishments existing, and no controversies respecting them
 afloat—and to inquire, whether it can be clearly explained and
 defended on the avowed principles of Protestant Congrega-
 tionalism.

The Congregational churches—Baptist and Pædo-baptist—have all their chapels secured by trust-deeds, not to *them* absolutely, but—to the inculcation of their peculiar principles, and the maintenance of their distinctive discipline. These trust-deeds support generally, perhaps universally, Calvinistic theology—and adult, or infant baptism, as the case may be ;—they sometimes require, in Baptist churches, that the communion shall be *strict*, no individual not having been immersed in mature age being ever admissible to the Lord's table. They frequently contain very minute enforcements as to the manner in which the church shall conduct its affairs ; and not seldom, we believe, prescribe, that, on a certain number of the church requiring it, the minister, and in some cases the deacons, shall be called upon to declare, *in writing*, their adherence to the doctrines and "order" set forth.*

Now, we are not prepared to say that all this should not be ; we are not prepared to say that property, held by a society, and therefore not private, is not to be secured to the society by some legal instrument, and thus preserved from individual usurpation ; nor are we prepared, at present, to suggest any new form of doing this, short of those to which we have referred : but we *are* prepared to put a few questions on the subject, as it now stands, and to propose doubts occurring to ourselves, which, *on the principles professed by Congregationalists*, we find it difficult to answer or resolve.

Can it be said that Dissenters, Baptists, and Pædo-baptists, repudiate creeds, when almost every chapel has one attached to it ?

Can it be said that Dissenting ministers are entirely free from the slavery of subscription, when, at any moment, some of them at least, are liable to be required to sign their names to a doctrinal standard ?

Can it be said that Dissenting churches are at liberty to appeal exclusively to the Scriptures—to follow fully their own convictions—to adopt and profess whatever they deem to be the will of Christ—to alter their creed—their mode of baptism—their terms of communion—or in short, to exercise the right of private judgment, each "regulating its own discipline, offices," &c., when they are all bound, by legal instruments, to their own, or their fathers' previous interpretation, at the peril of losing their places of worship ?

Under such circumstances, *can* the language of Mr. Morison,

* We have been informed that the Congregational Board objects to sanction chapels the deeds of which contain this clause.

and the Essex Ministers, be faithfully and honestly used?—such as their objecting to the pretended apostolic scheme, because “it puts down the spirit of inquiry:”—their saying that they expect “by the careful study of the Bible, to clear its doctrines from the rust and the rubbish which the ignorance of former ages has heaped upon them” (the trust-deeds of some of their chapels providing, *perhaps*, for the maintenance of that rubbish); their speaking of their society “as an institution, all whose preachers say, and say “*without inconsistency and without reserve*, “the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants?”

To all these, however, and a thousand such questions, it will be replied—have not those who build chapels a *right* to prescribe the doctrines to be taught in them? Have they not a right thus to endow whatever sentiments they please? and are they not justified, by defining in the legal deed, the creed they patronise, to seek its preservation, security, and permanence?

Their *right* to do it is unquestionable,—that is, so far as *man* is concerned. As to any responsibility to their fellow-mortals, “they may do what they will with their own.” But no man, or body of men, can, in the sight of God, have a right to do wrong. If, therefore, the matter in question should *be* wrong, they have *not* a right to do it. That doubts, at least, respecting its rectitude might fairly be started, will appear from considering it for a moment, in connexion with the principle of Protestantism—the pretensions of Dissent—and the nature of Christianity.

The principle of Protestantism is the right—and what is more—the *duty*, in individuals and communities judging for themselves in matters of religion, and appealing directly and solely to the Scriptures. In addition to this, Protestantism having arisen after ages of ignorance, apostasy, and corruption, and it being therefore impossible that “the rust and the rubbish” of accumulated centuries could be got rid of at once, it is to be expected that one generation of its genuine children will improve upon another, and that successive steps will be both made and required in order to get back to *all* that is apostolic, and (in the language of Mr. Morison) to see the doctrines and institutions of our religion “in all the brightness and beauty of their original—the brightness and beauty in which they appeared when they first came from the hands of the Redeemer.”

Such is Protestantism. But is it consistent with this, for the men of one age to fix all that is to be professed and done by posterity? as if, in the first place, their successors had not the same rights and duties with themselves; or as if, in the second, *they* had done everything that required to be done, and that nothing remained, in the way either of reformation or discovery, for others to accomplish?

But, it will be said, they do not mean this. Other generations are at liberty to think and act as they please, only, as truth is so important, and they have built their edifices for its support and propagation, they secure, by deed, its future maintenance, and therefore make the holding of it the condition and tenure of enjoying the property.

Is this, then, consistent, either with the pretensions of Dissent, or the nature of Christianity?

Dissent objects to all dependence of the Church on anything whatever but argument and persuasion. It condemns the patronage of Parliaments—the attempts to support or preserve truth by law—and the conduct of that community which consents to be so circumstanced as not to be able to “change its creed,” without appealing to the civil power, or giving up the advantages it possesses. All this it condemns, because the *principle* involved in it not only offends against truth, by placing its support on an arm of flesh, but is likely to be applied to the cause of error; and if so, may perpetuate *it*, by enlisting prejudice and interest on its side, and by closing for ever, or for many generations, the eye, and the understanding, and the conscience of multitudes, so the light of evidence, the demonstrations of argument, and the “voices” alike of apostles and their Lord. Do not, however, they who thus feel and speak, fall into something very similar to what they condemn, when, instead of confiding in reason and argument, they commit the keeping of the truth *to law*—to the civil courts—to parliamentary protection—to secular power? They not only, by this act, *appear*, at least, to put more faith in force than persuasion, in man than God,—but they gratuitously surrender into the hands of the State, their own liberty and that of their children. Established Churches *get something* for the vassalage with which Dr. Wardlaw so unanswerably upbraids them; the property they hold, on the condition of ceasing to inquire and to learn, is given to them by those who impose the conditions; but a voluntary society, after creating for itself its sacred edifice, voluntarily surrenders both its liberty and it, and says to the State, “this I have built;—“thus and thus at present I believe;—this belief I never ought “to alter;—the Bible, and the Bible only, has been *hitherto* my “religion;—that it is to be no more;—I hereby declare that if “I should profess to be taught by the Bible to alter anything I “now acknowledge, *that* alteration will certainly be error; to “secure, therefore, the truth, I give myself, my creed, and my “property, to *thee*; do *thou* see that I continue faithful—that “I endanger not, nor depart from, the unquestionable verities “I now enumerate; or, if I do, punish me by ejecting me

“from my own building, and thus serve and save the truth by force.”

There is no exaggeration in this. When the creed is fixed, and attached to a certain building by a church, its operation is not only to hold *other* generations to it, in all coming time, but to hold it to those who impose it on themselves, so that (we speak it with deep reverence) if the Spirit of God were copiously to descend upon them, and lead them into truth, and show them some great error they had established, they would have to abandon their properly, in order to obey the mind of the Spirit; or to sin against the Spirit, by concealing their convictions to retain the property; or to violate the law by departing from the terms of their own deed—at once stultifying themselves and sanctioning posterity in farther departures.

Dissent always speaks of the Reformation as incomplete; regrets that the fathers of the English Church gave permanency and immutability to the imperfect, and still corrupted and disfigured form of truth, which was all they had attained to; and it laments that all argument must necessarily be lost upon a church, the ministers of which, whatever they may think, are committed and bound to what other ages have fixed and prescribed. But is not this the direct and necessary tendency of their own conduct? Suppose there was no Established Church at all, but that the whole land was completely filled with Independent and Baptist chapels; that all the people were divided between them, and that they were all *in trust* as such chapels now are; what would be the use, in such circumstances, of carrying on the Baptist controversy? The ministers might preach, and write books,—the people might hear and read; but if either party suffered themselves to be convinced, they must do it at their cost—the minister must leave the people—the people their place. Living beings can think and be affected,—evidence and truth may operate upon them, and alter their convictions, but bricks and mortar cannot be convinced,—a piece of parchment is deaf to argument,—it has made up its mind,—and resolutely adheres to its first thoughts; it has put a certain construction on the Scriptures; and hence, whatever may be, in fact, the announcement of “the Bible, and the Bible only,” and however they who are in the power of the parchment may profess to appeal to it, as long as they remain in the house regulated by the deed, and as long as the world itself, or the house, at least, stands, all others who ever possess it, must dip adults, or sprinkle sucklings as the case may be! It makes no matter what turn the controversy is taking out of doors. Let it be supposed that some peculiar discoveries had been made, and that it was now obvious that

one of the parties was triumphantly and demonstratively right, still it would be impossible for the other to admit, to acquiesce in, and act upon this, unless it abandoned all its chapels, which would be a great sacrifice; or petitioned the legislature *to give it leave to follow its own convictions, and obey Christ*,—which would be a greater. Until the one or the other of these things was done, the parties in question could not ask, as if it were unanswerable, in the words of Dr. Halley, “Let any practice among us, however general, or however ancient, be proved unscriptural, and what should hinder any of our churches from immediately renouncing it?”

Still, it will be inquired, is nothing to be done to secure the truth? Is a place to be built, and the people left to “change their creed,” and alter their customs, and adopt, in fact, anything they like? They may come to imbibe the worst errors;—they may turn, in a generation or two, hardened heretics; or they may fall into the vagaries of modern fanaticism; or they may go back to Canterbury or Rome: are we not to take measures for preserving and perpetuating God’s own truth, by forbidding the future perversion of our property to what we condemn?

Is this the way, it might be asked in reply, which the nature of Christianity—the genius and spirit of the Gospel, prescribes for its preservation? Is this the way in which Christ’s promise is to take effect, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church?” Can Christ not take care of his own truth? Dare you not trust Him with it? Are his aides, and grace, and promises to be withdrawn, after the present age? Is there to be no Spirit to guide your successors, that you must chalk out their way?—to enlighten and teach them, that you must put into their hands, ready made, the conclusions they must come to in all their inquiries? You expect your prescriptions and enforcements of truth either to have some effect or none: if none, and the truth is maintained *for its own sake*, what is their use? If some, and *for their sake*, therefore, the truth is maintained, what is the value of *such maintenance*?—the worth of a profession resting on the dictates of a trust-deed? Still it will be thought, that it is not right, or not safe, to leave a people at liberty to adopt error. But why? Are they to adopt it merely because they may? If they have not liberty to adopt error, can it be said that they have liberty to adopt truth? He who is free to do right, must be free to do wrong. Can God be glorified, the Gospel obeyed, Christ honoured, with an attempt on the part of one age, to induce the next, to maintain the truth *on other grounds* distinct from its own evidence and worth? But the property, it will be said, may

come to be lost to the truth entirely. Well; and what then? You have to do, not with consequences, but with duty. The question is, does God require at your hands the preservation of His truth by the means you propose? Is it consistent with faith in Him; with the spirituality of the Gospel,—its reasonable service,—its appeal to the understanding of individual man;—the constitution, duties, and, in the language of Dr. Wardlaw, “the ‘undoubted prerogative of a church,’”—is it consistent with these things, and such as these, for you to seek to serve the cause of religion by calling to your aid, through a legal instrument, the powers of the world—the sword of the magistrate—the terrors of the law, together with the exercise of dictation and authority, or of that which comes to something very like it—an appeal of the nature of a bribe or a threat—an appeal, from you, to the pecuniary interests, or the mental indolence, of other generations? Considering the nature and genius of the Gospel, is it not likely that to think of preserving it by legal bonds, may, in God’s sight, be actually worse than for a father to imagine, that to keep his children from “erring and straying,” he must put them in prison, or that to keep them honest, he must cut off their hands?

Space, we find, would utterly fail us, if we attempted to propose all the questions, difficulties, and doubts, which recent meditation on the present subject, in connexion with the character and controversies of the times, has excited within us; nor will it be possible here, even to glance at many things which, more or less, bear upon and illustrate both its perplexity and importance. We much fear that the celebrated Protestant principle, so frequently put, and so frequently *cheered*, is not understood, or not held, or not acted on, or not trusted, by many Protestants. We much fear that some who profess to be Protestants, *par excellence*, and who taunt some sister church or sect with being but half-reformed, or hardly that, will scarcely themselves pass unscathed under the fire of their own arguments. We much fear that though the professed principles and popular “apologies” of some religionists are all on the side of religious liberty, their actual *practice* involves what countenances Popish assumption. We much fear that *all* the different Christian denominations are proceeding on a plan which must render the fulfilment of Christ’s prayer impossible unless *Cæsar will give permission!* They are giving perpetuity to their differences and distinctions, and so completely putting them into the keeping of the law, and out of their own power of correction, that if, by a sudden donation of grace and light, they were all to be ready to come together on some comprehensive and catholic platform,

abandoning everything but the principles and rites of a common Christianity, they could not do it—or could not legally—till the powers of the world nodded assent. We much fear that either the Protestant principle or the Protestant practice must be given up—that both cannot be held by same parties. A church claiming the patrimony of a traditional *interpretation* of the Bible can consistently seek to perpetuate that by ecclesiastical creeds and legal securities, and to forbid its successors ever to depart from it; but a church appealing “to the Bible, and the Bible only,” and actually claiming as “its undoubted prerogative,” the privilege of “changing its creed,” can only state, at any given time, its own present belief, without professing to be bound by that of its predecessors, or attempting to bind its successors to its own. A church may change its creed, but *the church* cannot. A Protestant church may do so, and ought to preserve to itself the liberty of doing so, because it is one of a number of sects that have all, as once a part of the apostasy, been carried away from primitive truth and primitive customs,—are all professedly labouring to get back again to the state of things under the apostles—are all bound, therefore, to be ready to adopt any change that shall bring them nearer to their desired object—and, till they are sure that they have attained this, none of them can call itself *the church*, or can, consistently with its character, either bind itself to inquire no more, or forbid its successors to inquire for themselves. *The Church*, however, may do this. Its doctrines and constitution are true and apostolic; they cannot be changed without arrogance and injury—and, therefore, it would seem, may be attached by it to its buildings, and imposed on its successors, as Protestants may consistently attach the Bible. Is every Baptist and Independent society *this church*? Are *they* in every point,—doctrinal, ritual, and constitutional,—perfect and apostolic? Is there nothing for them to alter, that they ask the law to see to it that *for ever* they alter nothing?

“But nobody,” it may be said, “thinks of what deeds may specify or appoint. Most ministers and churches are probably ignorant of the contents of their own. They never practically have any operation, and therefore the whole matter is much more speculative and curious than useful.” To this objection, there are two replies. If it be true, the thing is not right; and if it be false, it is not good. If churches are holding property on a certain tenure, and are yet utterly regardless of that, using their liberty to think and act in opposition to the legal injunctions against it, what is this but another form of clerical or ecclesiastical subscription without caring about what is sub-

scribed, or without intending to be bound by it? But the objection is false in fact. Not only is it always possible, at any moment, for any individual to take advantage of some clause in a deed, to annoy or eject a church that may be exercising "its undoubted prerogative," but such cases actually occur. It also occurs that churches are saddled with what they dislike, or a majority in them, but they choose to bear it for the sake of the property rather than exercise their "undoubted prerogative." We have in our eye, at this moment, a Baptist church which became open in its communion—one of the simplest specimens of change—one that will be admitted by most, to have advanced it nearer to what a church should be; but, after doing this, it was discovered that it was *not* their "prerogative,"—they might do it "as a church," but they could not as "an endowed church." Some few stuck to this. Whether scriptural or not, it was law. Law was on their side. The founders of the church had given them the advantage of an argument in favour of their views, which enabled them to listen, with perfect composure, to the most convincing demonstrations of their brethren, and to look calmly at their overwhelming numbers as compared with themselves. The result was, that the majority departed, to exercise their "undoubted prerogative" of building for themselves another sanctuary, which will probably be secured to open communion; so that, if their successors, using the rights and liberties of their fathers, should come to be convinced that strict communion *is*, after all, right and apostolic, they will be compelled, by force of law, to violate their consciences or quit the place! There are cases, also, in which churches submit to the reading of the prayers, because they cannot get rid of them, but at the expense of their building, which they cannot afford. In many things, indeed, trustees are sometimes found practically to interfere with the proceedings, peace, and "independency" of a church.

Here, however, for the present, we must close our remarks. We shall be glad to see the subject thoroughly gone into by some able hand; and as we have left many things unsaid, and may probably be called upon by some to say them, we shall be happy, in this way, to contribute our mite towards the discussion. We are not disposed to apologize for remarks which may seem to embarrass our own friends. *We have no friends to be put in comparison with* CONSISTENCY *and* TRUTH. We have no doubt either, but that many of those with whom we side in the great controversies of the day, have often revolved the subject before us, and have seen their way through all its intricacies. We shall deem ourselves happy in eliciting their thoughts. For

Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Halley, and others, to whom we have had to refer, we cherish unfeigned and profound respect. Our opinion of Dr. Wardlaw's volume, with the exception to which we have now referred, and perhaps one other, is before the public. Dr. Halley we hold in high estimation. The sentiments we have quoted from his discourse are, we are persuaded, deeply felt and ardently cherished by him, and sincerely believed to be such as he could consistently avow. With him, we hold and value them; like him, we feel that they must be held by us, and held fully, practically, consistently, or we shall be able to defend ourselves neither against those from whom we dissent, nor against those who dissent from us. Dr. W. has done the first; Dr. H. the second. On the ground they take, they are safe and successful; but, as we have our doubts whether this ground is always kept, or whether it be not practically abandoned by the bodies to which our friends belong, these doubts we have taken the liberty to throw out. By the way, we wonder what the "brethren," for instance, and some like them, who profess to have not only the Bible in the midst of them, but the Spirit, in a peculiar, if not miraculous, sense, so unfolding to them the truth, that they can never affirm that they will think to-morrow precisely as they think to-day—we wonder what *they* do with their buildings? When they erect a place, and thus create property, how do they secure it? That there must be some sort of security we have already admitted. Public property is not private. As to our views of the extent to which, and the terms by which, a society of Protestants, more especially Dissenters, should secure theirs, in consistency with their professed and fundamental principles, these we reserve to a future occasion.

Such were our intended last words. It strikes us, however, that one or two may not be improperly added, to guard against the misconception of our spirit and purpose. We are not unaware that the lamentable defection of the English Presbyterian churches,—their sliding into Socinianism, or dying out,—is often attributed to the want of specificness, in their trust-deeds, of the doctrinal sentiments to be maintained by them; and in these days of insinuation and calumny, it might be said that the Eclectic had become Socinian, because of our introduction of the present discussion. To these objections, we reply, in the first place, that the defection referred to may perhaps admit of explanation on other grounds. We believe it may, and that it might have been prevented without the legal specificness demanded. But if not, the question still comes, whether *legal* securities are the Scriptural way, according to certain popular and controversial

common-places, of preserving and perpetuating the true faith? If not, and yet if necessary, *where are we?* On such an admission, *can* the great Protestant principle, "the Bible, and the Bible only," be honestly professed, or confidently trusted? If it be felt that it cannot, let it be acknowledged. If experience have proved that it is *inexpedient* to leave succeeding churches and generations to the Bible and to themselves, let it be avowed that we do, *from expediency*, what it may be difficult to reconcile with theoretic maxims; and then let this moderate, in some degree, the tone and language with which such maxims are used in debate. As to any leaning, on our part, to that irreligious and impious recklessness of speculation, which may be supposed to be guarded against by protecting the faith by begal securities, we think it unnecessary to deny the existence. The evangelical spirit that has ever distinguished this journal, and which we are as anxious as any of our predecessors to maintain, is denial enough. There are other evils besides heresy; and other rights besides those of man. *God* has his rights, if we may so speak without impropriety; and, jealous for His honour, we have thrown out, what, in our view, may tend to maintain them. A legal instrument may not only restrain the spirit of man, the liberty of human speculation that leads to error; it may restrain the Spirit of God; it may limit the liberty of the church to listen obediently to the voice of its Lord—to mark his "stately steppings in the sanctuary"—to welcome His will as His word unfolds it,—that word which, after having long been wrested from it by the usurpation of Antichrist, it has now recovered, and recovered to obey exclusively and alone. We are not arguing for the liberty of men to carry out whatever they *think*; but of Christian men to carry out whatever they *read*! If it should be objected, that the principle of non-interference with the inquiries and faith of future generations, if pushed to its legitimate consequences, would require churches to be so left, that they might be turned into mosques, or synagogues, or heathen temples, or halls of science, or schools of atheism; we should reply, that our observations ought in fairness to be taken as explained and limited by the subject they refer to. We have all along been proceeding on the principle of Protestantism, and on the right of private judgment, as claimed by Protestant sects; a right to be exercised within the bounds of the Bible, not beyond them. If the principle cannot be consistently maintained without involving the hazard of such extremes as we have specified, others must look at this as well as we. We believe that it can. Even, however, if it could not, we should have no fear for either Protestantism or Christianity in acting upon it.

We wish it also to be observed, that our remarks are not intended to apply to Baptist and Pædo-baptist Dissenters only. Methodists, Presbyterians, Protestant Episcopalians, and others, are all concerned, more or less, with the bearings of this subject. They are all seeking to perpetuate, *by law*, their respective peculiarities, and are thus putting it out of the power of themselves or their successors to be anything but what they are at this moment. We deeply feel this view of the matter; and, though we have glanced at it already, cannot close without referring to it again. We are thirsting for Christian union, and, as far as possible, for Christian unanimity. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem—we sigh over the distractions of the times. We long to see the approximation of the pious towards each other. We should be happy, indeed, if the different denominations who “hold the “Head” could meet and mingle in the services of the sanctuary, and thus evince their substantial oneness, even while retaining their several peculiarities; but we should be still happier, if they possessed the will, and with it the *power*, to give up something for the sake of union,—a union somewhat more palpable and impressive than is indicated by the interchange of good words and kind looks, in connexion with the maintenance of their distinctive badges. We have often stated, that we oppose establishments because they necessarily interfere with the union of Christians; they perpetuate differences; they confer immortality on the distinctions of a sect; they are thus in their very nature separating and schismatical, by rendering it impossible for those communities which they fetter with their favours, from modifying anything to meet the advances of other churches. The question, however, is not to be evaded, whether every sect, by the legal attachment of its peculiarities to its property, does not in some degree sanction them in this? Is there not here an effort to perpetuate and immortalize separations and differences? Nay, supposing a particular sect to be in every point the exact image of the apostolic model, does it not, by the act referred to, sanction *that* in other churches (by supposition wrong), which will for ever prevent their becoming right, by for ever depriving them of the liberty to listen to, and to copy from, itself? What is the use of controversy under such circumstances? If controversy does not aim at the conviction of adversaries, and *action corresponding to that conviction*, what does it aim at? But if each party, before they begin, are to take measures *to prevent their acting*, in spite of the convictions which discussion may produce, where shall we find words adequately to describe conduct like this? When, O when, on this system, can Christians come to see “eye to eye?” When can schisms and dissensions cease?

How shall roots of bitterness be removed? At what era, without a miracle, or without convulsions in civil society, will the church be one,—one alike by Truth and Love?

VI.

OUR BOOK CLUB.

WE recently directed attention to the "*Chronicles of Carlingford*;" with more pleasure we direct attention to another series of the same chronicles, in the greater part of which—*Chronicles of Carlingford. The Rector and the Doctor's Family* (Wm. Blackwood and Sons)—Mrs. Oliphant writes much more like her recognizable self. The longer and more complete of the two chronicles has a good deal of her ordinary painfulness of household painting and power of keeping the attention interested by a sort of nervous excitement, about things in themselves trifling. Nettie is not only a wonderful creature herself, but she is wonderfully well-drawn. The story of the Doctor's family is quite a household story, simply detailing the loves of the Doctor in their happy issue; and while containing many of those pleasant and even recondite touches of humour which we expect in our writer, proceeding usually too painfully along to be called a very pleasant story, the volume has not the genius of its more bitter and malevolent predecessor: and in the first story (the Rector), in this volume, our Church of England friends find that Mrs. Oliphant has kept a rod in pickle for them. In the first series we had a description of the effect produced by Vincent's "innocent little sermons;" in this we have an account of the rector's "smooth little sermon, which nobody cared about, and which disturbed nobody." It is a story of a rector who found himself installed in a rectory without knowing how to do his work: really not a very uncommon case. We have known hundreds of such; only the peculiarity of this rector was that he had a conscience, and finding that he could not perform his task, he resigned his rectory. He found himself by a bedside with a young curate and a young woman, and he found himself unable to touch,

much less win, the soul into whose confidence *they* insinuated themselves most easily.

The Rector went straight home—straight to his study, where he shut himself in, and was not to be disturbed; that night was one long to be remembered in the good man's history. For the first time in his life he set himself to inquire what was his supposed business in this world. His treatise on the Greek verb, and his new edition of Sophocles, were highly creditable to the Fellow of All-Souls; but how about the Rector of Carlingford? What was he doing here, among that little world of human creatures who were dying, being born, perishing, suffering, falling into misfortune and anguish, and all manner of human vicissitudes, every day? Young Wentworth knew what to say to that woman in her distress; and so might the Rector, had her distress concerned a disputed translation, or a disused idiom. The good man was startled in his composure and calm. To-day he had visibly failed in a duty which even in All-Souls was certainly known to be one of the duties of a Christian priest. Was he a Christian priest, or what was he? He was troubled to the very depths of his soul. To hold an office the duties of which he could not perform, was clearly impossible. The only question, and that a hard one, was, whether he could learn to discharge those duties, or whether he must cease to be Rector of Carlingford. He laboured over this problem in his solitude, and could find no answer. "Things were different when we were young," was the only thought that was any comfort to him, and that was poor consolation.

For one thing, it is hard upon the most magnanimous of men to confess that he has undertaken an office for which he has not found himself capable. Magnanimity was perhaps too lofty a word to apply to the Rector; but he was honest to the bottom of his soul. As soon as he became aware of what was included in the duties of his office, he must perform them, or quit his post. But how to perform them? Can one *learn* to convey consolation to the dying, to teach the ignorant, to comfort the sorrowful? Are these matters to be acquired by study, like Greek verbs or intricate measures? The Rector's heart said No. The Rector's imagination unfolded before him, in all its halcyon blessedness, that ancient paradise of All-Souls, where no such confounding demands ever disturbed his beatitude. The good man groaned within himself over the mortification, the labour, the sorrow, which this living was bringing upon him.

Nobody, however, knew anything about those conflicting thoughts which rent his sober bosom. He preached next Sunday as usual, letting no trace of the distressed, wistful anxiety to do his duty which now possessed him gleam into his sermon. He looked down upon a crowd of unsympathetic, uninterested faces, when he delivered that smooth little sermon, which nobody cared much about, and which disturbed nobody. The only eyes which in the smallest degree comprehended him were those of good Miss Wodehouse, who had been the witness and the participator of his humiliation. Lucy was not there.

Doubtless Lucy was at St. Roque's, where the sermons of the perpetual curate differed much from those of the Rector of Carlingford. Ah me! the rectorship, with all its responsibilities, was a serious business; and what was to become of it yet, Mr. Proctor could not see. He was not a hasty man—he determined to wait and see what events might make of it; to consider it ripely—to take full counsel with himself. Every time he came out of his mother's presence, he came affected and full of anxiety to preserve to her that home which pleased her so much. She was the strong point in favour of Carlingford; and it was no small tribute to the good man's filial affection, that for her chiefly he kept his neck under the yoke of a service to which he knew himself unequal, and, sighing, turned his back upon his beloved cloisters. If there had been no other sick-beds immediately in Carlingford, Mrs. Proctor would have won the day.

The volume will not add to Mrs. Oliphant's well-earned fame, nor will it detract from it. For our own part we like best to think of her as the authoress of two or three painfully-pleasant stories we read ten or twelve years since.
